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WORK AND WAGES.

A Tale

BY MARY HOWITT.

WORK AND WAGES:

OR,

LIFE IN SERVICE.

A CONTINUATION OF "LITTLE COIN, MUCH CARE."

BY MARY HOWITT,

AUTHOR OF

"STRIVE AND THRIVE," "HOPE ON! HOPE EVER!" "SOWING AND REAPING," "WHO SHALL BE GREATEST?" "WHICH IS THE WISER?" "LITTLE COIN, MUCH CARE," &c. &c.

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WORK AND WAGES;

OR,

LIFE IN SERVICE.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS SHE? NOTHING BUT A MAID-SERVANT!

NEVER in this world was servant-girl more tired than was the Miss Cotterills' Peggy on that Thursday afternoon which concluded her servitude with them. Every room in the house, and every corner of every room, had now been thoroughly cleaned. Peggy had lived only six weeks with the Miss Cotterills, and the same operations had been performed by her predecessor before her arrival. The house did not want this cleaning—so the Miss Cotterills themselves said—but then it was a penance they demanded from every servant before leaving, and why should Peggy be exempted, though she did complain so much of that pain in her right knee, when she went down on her knees to scour? No—Peggy, they said, was afraid of work, and they never would break through a good rule. So the house was cleaned from top to bottom, every carpet taken up, and every floor scoured; and poor Peggy, who had an incipient white swelling, had thus her terrible complaint confirmed. But what a beautifully clean house was the Miss Cotterills'! Every piece of earthen-

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ware and china had been carefully washed; every article of tin, brass, and copper elaborately scoured and polished, even to the thirty-years-old tea-kettle, which, having had three holes in it for the last ten years, served now only for show, whilst the parlour coal-scuttle, a sort of household idol, shone in its corner as if made of red gold. All this being done, Peggy sate down on the clean kitchen hearth, tired and spiritless: she had not got another place, and her home, which was governed by a step-father, was a joyless one to return to.

Peggy sate down, and determined with herself that for the future she never would take service with single ladies again: they were so exact, so suspicious; they had nothing to do but to peep about and pry into everything: and, if they miscounted the lumps of sugar in the sugar-basin, they were sure to say you had taken some; and if you did carry hot water into your miserably cold bed-room in a stone bottle, to warm your poor feet in bed, didn't they say you had taken into your bed-room a bottle of beer to drink? and if you did chance to have a little brooch given you by a friend, or a pink ribbon which you had made into loops for your Sunday bonnet-cap, were not they sure, some day or other, when you were out, to go and rummage among your things, and find them, and then fly into your very face with them the moment you entered the house, taking you so by surprise that you had not a word to say for yourself!

No; poor Peggy resolved that she never would live again with a couple of single ladies; and, if she could only get speech of the new servant this evening, she would tell her, as sure as she was alive, what sort of people she was going to live with. Perhaps the Miss Cotterills suspected something of this kind; for, no sooner had Peggy formed this determination than the

elder of the two walked into the kitchen, and, seeing Peggy sitting by the fire with her hands on her knees, inquired what in the world she meant by doing so? Was it not then four o'clock? and had she not been ordered to be off by five? While Miss Cotterill was thus speaking, the second sister entered likewise, and took up her sister's last words—"By five you were to be off, and there you sit as if you had no life in you."

It was not quite true that Peggy was then sitting, for she had risen from her seat the moment Miss Cotterill entered; she offered no defence, however, but, taking up a little brown jug, drew some hot water from the boiler, and said quietly she would be ready to be off in half an hour. Peggy disarmed her mistresses by her quiet inoffensive manner, and going into her garret immediately. They too stood by the kitchen fire, and, looking round, said they must confess that everything was very clean, and that would be a good lesson to the new-girl as to the way in which everything must be kept.

In half an hour Peggy came down again, carrying a small deal box, and a bundle in her hand, which she set in a corner of the kitchen, as much out of the way as possible, and then, five minutes afterwards, came down in her bonnet and shawl, and with a bonnet-box, tied up in an apron, in her hand. Her worldly possessions were all there, and Peggy was very poor. She then filled the tea-kettle and set it on the fire, ready for the ladies' tea, and, meekly making a courtesy, said she was ready to go. The Miss Cotterills glanced at the Dutch-clock on the wall, and saw that it wanted five minutes to five; they told her, therefore, that she had better get tea for them before she went, and when it was ready they would pay her her wages. The two mistresses went into the parlour, whilst Peggy, who had hurried herself so much to get ready, took off her

bonnet and shawl again—not unreluctantly either, for she thought they would perhaps give her her tea before she went, which would be much better than going home hungry. She took in the tea things, the kettle, and the spirit-lamp; and Miss Agatha, whose quarter it now was to manage the housekeeping affairs, paid her her few shillings of wages, and then graciously told her that, in consideration of her youth, and of her having latterly done her work pretty well, they were willing to pass over her faults—to say nothing about the missing white sugar, nor about the beer-bottle found in her bed-room, nor about the pink ribbon in her cap, nor the sweetheart she was suspected of having, but to give her a general good character. The ladies had threatened the very reverse of this, and so poor Peggy dropped a courtesy and felt very grateful.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," said He who understood better than any other living being the philosophy of social life; and poor Peggy's meekness touched the cold suspicious hearts of these two ladies. "There's no need to give her her tea," said Miss Agatha, when she was out of the room, putting her suggestion into a negative form, as if to solicit a negative reply.

"I dare say she made a good dinner," returned the elder; "and yet it is a cold day, and her family are miserably poor. Shall I ring for her?"

"Just as you please," said Miss Agatha. Her sister rung, and Peggy, in her bonnet and shawl, again entered. Miss Agatha poured some weak tea into the slop-basin, and, smearing a slice of bread with the smallest possible quantity of butter, gave them to her.

Why did tears start into the poor girl's eyes? and why, five minutes afterwards, when she met on the door-steps the new maid-servant, did she not say one word to the disadvantage of her mistresses, although,

an hour before, she had threatened to do so? Because she had received some little kindness and consideration from them; and, Heaven knows, she received but little. Oh, how easy a thing it is to make the poor our grateful friends!

Jane Ford, the new servant, prepossessed her new mistresses greatly in her favour, even that first night. She looked so neat in her dark stuff gown, white apron, little plain collar, and close net cap, and with her hair braided instead of curled, as poor Peggy wore hers; and she really was such a good-tempered, healthy-looking girl, and so very pretty withal!

"She's such a creditable-looking servant," said the elder sister; "it's a pleasure to see such about a house."

"Just the sort of person to live with ladies," said the second; "for thus she is out of the way of temptation. But one thing," added she, "we must take care of, and that is, that we do not spoil her—only think of Mrs. Burton's Lucy!"

"We'll give her plenty to do," said Agatha. "Never let her think herself perfect," added Miss Cotterill; and then, as if the words suggested the idea, up she rose and went into the kitchen, where there was plenty to find fault with even on this first evening.

"Nine o'clock, and a fire like this!" exclaimed the acrid voice of the elder lady, as she entered the kitchen and found Jane sitting before a fire which made the whole place look cheerful, while a candle was burning on the table and Jane doing nothing—"what can you mean by extravagance like this?" Jane said it was a very cold night, and she did not know that she had made too large a fire; while her mistress took up the kitchen tongs and removed the largest pieces of blazing coal. "Its downright shameful extravagance, and what we never can allow: the kitchen fire is made up but once after tea, and that you will please to remember."

Jane said she was very sorry; and then the second sister entered the kitchen, and, understanding the cause of complaint, chimed in with her sister, and the two scolded the new servant, spite of the former favourable impression, or rather perhaps in consequence of it.

Jane was initiated into her duties with the utmost exactitude: not a day passed but new injunctions were given and old ones repeated. "And now this you must remember," enjoined Miss Agatha, in one of her .ectures, about a week after Jane had lived with them —"no gossipping with neighbours' servants will be permitted by us; no coming of pretended friends or relations, cousins or brothers. You must think, as I have so often told you, of nothing but your duty to us, your mistresses. Your time is ours, which we pay for; your mind must be ours also. Once a week, you know, you go to church, to evening service, either with my sister or myself. We both go to church on Sunday morning; we take it by turns to go in the evening, and you regularly accompany the one that goes; we wish to make you a good girl. You know your catechism, and have been confirmed, I hope." Jane said she had, and added—though it was not much to the point—that she had a Church of England prayer-book, and a bible, and a Methodist hymn-book.

"You are not a Methodist, sure!" exclaimed Miss Agatha, in unfeigned consternation. No, Jane said, not a Methodist certainly; but Mrs. Griffiths, who was a friend of hers, was a Methodist, and with her she had often gone to the chapel.

"You don't know, then," said Miss Agatha, "that the Methodists, and all such people, hold dangerous revolutionary principles, and instil all sorts of improper notions into the heads of the poor? Never let me hear you talk of Methodists again!"

"What is that you say about Methodists?" asked

Miss Cotterill, who, hearing her sister in such eager discourse with the servant, entered the kitchen—"surely the girl is no Methodist!"

"I hope not indeed!" said Miss Agatha; "the Church of England, as I tell her, is the only true place of worship, and the Methodists, and Quakers, and all such people, are dangerous and disaffected."

"Mind what Miss Agatha says," remarked the elder sister, "and have nothing to do with Methodists; they are canting plausible people, that disguise the most fatal opinions under a cloak of religion."

"Dear me!" said poor Jane, utterly confounded, and wondering whether Mrs. Griffiths and her son Mark knew what sort of people the Methodists were, or whether it were possible that *they* could have bad designs under their kind and friendly seeming; "Dear me! but I'm not a regular Methodist, ma'am," nor Mark Griffiths neither, thought she, though she did not say so; "but Mrs. Griffiths has been like a mother to me."

"Will you understand, Jane," continued Miss Agatha, "that these Methodist acquaintance of yours never come about the place, nor shall we suffer you to go to them. You go with us to church, and read your prayer-book; that is the way to learn your duty both to God and man."

"Yes, ma'am," replied Jane, and courtesied, thinking the while that this decision against the Griffiths, whom they did not know, was unjust, and that their prohibition regarding them was arbitrary.

"Now, remember what we have said to you," repeated both sisters in one breath; "bring us our bed candle, and go yourself to bed."

Jane did as she was bid, and retired to her own garret, to think over the warning she had had against Methodists, and to wonder whether Mark Griffiths and his mother knew that they were dangerous people.

Jane Ford, who as yet had but small experience in servitude, having only lived at the Ruben's Head, where she had hard work to do sixteen or eighteen hours each day; and then with a certain Mrs. Lewis, the wife of a master shoemaker, where there were seven children under eight years of age, and two apprentices in the house, thought, when she came into the service of two single ladies who lived in such a nice quiet way, she should enter, as it were, into a very paradise of life; she should wear a neat clean cap and a white apron in an afternoon, and should have a little time to sit and sew for herself, and to foot her stockings, and keep her things well mended: in fact, it seemed to her, in anticipation, that she should lead the life of a gentlewoman among servants. She thought of girls living in small public-houses and shoemakers' families, where all was in a muddle from morning till night, with no hope of quiet or order, from week's end to week's end, and her heart was filled with compassion for them; she thought she never would live in such families again—nay, almost, never again where there were children. She thought she was now quite in luck's way; nor did the fault-finding of her mistresses, whose philosophy it was never to seem satisfied, nor all their tirades against the Methodists, daunt her at all: she had made up her mind to like her place, and she flattered herself that, setting about, as she would do, to keep all clean and neat, and to be steady and good-tempered, she should soon make her mistresses very fond of her.

CHAPTER II.

A MAID-SERVANT!—AN ENEMY!

It was not such an easy thing as Jane had at first imagined to keep that small house neat and clean, according to the standard of neatness and cleanliness prescribed by the two sisters; but, what was worse even than their severe exactitude, was the system of suspicion and espionage to which she was subjected.

"I don't believe that girl has shaken the drugget this morning," the elder sister would say.

"If it have not been taken up this morning," Miss Agatha would reply, "there's a ravel of white thread half-way under it, which I put there yesterday to prove her." The white thread was not to be found, and presumptive evidence, therefore, was in Jane's favour.

"I will try if she be honest," again, one of the sisters would say, "and count the lumps of white sugar in the basin, which I will leave on the sideboard while we go out this evening: there's nothing like a proof."

Forty-seven lumps were in the basin at night, forty-seven were in it next morning: so far was satisfactory.

Poor Miss Cotterills! the business of their lives seemed to be to pry into the motives, and dive down into the very thoughts of their maid-servants! There were two or three ladies with whom they visited, and who made every week calls upon them. Their conversation always, sooner or later, in the course of their meetings, was about their servants. "Well, and how does Maria, or Ann, or Jane, or Susan, go on?" was always the question which, like good wine at the social board, made the spirit of their intercourse flow most freely.

"And how does Jane go on?"—asked the stout old Mrs. Tottington, who walked out for a gossip with one or other of her friends every afternoon, accompanied by her fat spaniel—"Miss Farnham says she pleases you."

"Hum!" said the elder sister; "hum!" said the younger sister, and rose up to see that the parlour door was closely shut.

At that moment Miss Farnham came in. "Oh, how do you do, Miss Farnham?" "Do take this chair by the fire, dear Miss Farnham," said the two Miss Cotterills.

"And how do you do, Miss Cotterills; and you, dear Mrs. Tottington?" returned she, being received by all with the utmost cordiality. Miss Farnham seated herself, and loosened the boa from her neck; and then Miss Cotterill began—"Mrs. Tottington was just asking about Jane when you came in."

"I declare I never saw anything like that coal-box," said Mrs. Tottington; "come here, Dash!—the whole house, in fact, is like nobody else's—so clean and bright!"

"The house is well enough," replied Miss Cotterill, who prided herself, nevertheless, on the beautiful polish of the furniture, and the general order of everything; "but Jane is a very artful girl, we were just going to tell you;" and again Miss Agatha looked to the closing of the door. "We were just going to tell you," continued she—"a very artful girl is Jane!"

"I always am suspicious of those quiet, clever servants," said Miss Farnham.

"Still waters—you know the proverb," said Mrs. Tottington.

"I told you," said Miss Agatha, "how much inclined she was to Methodism."

"What! is she a Methodist, then?" interrupted Miss Farnham, who, being a clergyman's daughter, and

having an uncle the rector of a living of 800*l.* a-year, was a desperate churchwoman; while Mrs. Tottington took off her boa, and looked curious as to what was coming. Miss Agatha began to tell Miss Farnham, and her sister began to tell Mrs. Tottington the interesting something, both together; but as this led to considerable confusion, Miss Agatha—who had the louder voice—continued, after the first moment, the narrator. "Yes, Agatha," said her sister, "you tell it; and, as Mrs. Tottington did not hear your beginning, you had better begin again."

"You see," said Miss Agatha, "she is such a decent respectable sort of girl, and, as far as we can make out, honest; but for all that, she is so artful—there is a something concealed that we cannot get to the bottom of. And then, you know, one cannot have people of whom one has no knowledge, coming about the place, especially when we are out of the way."

Both the auditors declared that to be impossible.

"It was only last Saturday night," resumed Miss Agatha, "we were at Mr. Rudford's, and came home half an hour earlier than we were expected—that is ever a good way of finding them out—and, just as we came in sight of the house, we saw a somebody coming down the steps from our door. 'Who have you had here?' asked we of Jane, the moment she opened the door: she looked quite confused, and said it was only her sister. 'Your sister!' we exclaimed; for it was the figure of a little old woman huddled up in a cloak."

"Quite a little hump-backed woman," interrupted Miss Cotterill.

"'Don't tell us any stories, said we,' continued Miss Agatha. 'It's no story,' said Jane, quite in a positive way; 'she is deformed, and very short, and in the lamp light looked, I dare say, like an old woman.' 'You know you have no right to have folks coming after

you in this way,' we said, 'when our backs are turned; what did she want?'"

"To be sure!" exclaimed both the visitors, "a most natural question!"

"'What did she want?' asked we," continued Miss Agatha. "She would not answer for a long time, and then said it was nothing particular; it was about something that only concerned her own family."

"Now that looks very bad," interrupted the elder Miss Cotterill.

"It was no sister, depend upon it!" said Mrs. Tottington; "depend upon it, she had been having her fortune told."

"We thought as much," continued Miss Agatha; "but it's a serious thing, you know, having people let into the house in that way, and so we told her. 'It's no fortune-teller,' said she, 'but only my sister; or, if I must speak the whole truth, my stepmother's daughter, only I call her sister, because she is so good to everybody;' and then she begun crying. 'Crying can do no good,' we said; 'tell us what she came about, and then we may believe you; always be open and speak the truth.' 'It's nothing but what concerns my father and my own family, and I can tell nobody,' said Jane."

And here we may as well tell our kind-hearted readers what the poor maid-servant would not tell her mistresses, that Letty's errand that night was to ask Jane's advice, or rather condolence, in their unhappy family circumstances. The father had been fourteen days absent from his family, and Letty, with a heart full almost to bursting, had thus come in the dark, after little Sally was in bed, to unburden her griefs and hear a few kind words spoken by Jane, whom she loved dearly. Jane, therefore, who was aware how the knowledge of her unfortunate, not to say guilty, connexions would prejudice the hearts of her mistresses against

her, would not have dared, as she valued her place, to have given the least intimation of the truth, but furthermore would try all in her power to keep it from their knowledge. It was unfortunate that Letty had been seen by them; still more was the poor girl perplexed when she remembered that Mark Griffiths was to come the next morning during church-time, to bring her any further family news. Jane was in a dilemma; and, because she looked confused, was believed to be guilty.

Thus much being communicated to our readers, we proceed with Miss Agatha's narrative. "I examined," said she, "everything, but nothing seemed to have been touched; there was part of a neck of boiled mutton in the pantry, but it had not been meddled with, nor even the bread, I do believe."

"No, I think she is honest," interrupted Miss Cotterill.

"But then," continued her sister, "she may get corrupted; and, really, that little crooked ill-looking person was just such a one as one naturally suspects. But, however, I have not yet done."

The two visitors bent forward in eager curiosity, and Miss Agatha continued, "We went to church the next morning, and when we returned Jane was hastily finishing laying the cloth, which she ought to have done half an hour before. 'What makes you so late, Jane?' asked we; she looked all in a flurry, and said she had mistaken the hour. 'Who have you had with you?' we asked; she looked ready to drop, and then went as red as a fire. 'Oh dear—nobody, ma'am,' said she. 'Now don't go to tell us any lies,' said we, for we got quite angry. 'Oh dear, yes, ma'am,' said she the next minute, 'only a young boy brought home my shoes, that have been mended;' and then she fetched in, as fast as could

be, a pair of shoes that had just been soled. 'Well, Jane,' said we, 'we shall find you out, depend upon it; it's no use trying to deceive us—no servant ever could deceive us yet.'"

"Well?" said both Miss Farnham and Mrs. Tottington.

"I went over," continued Miss Agatha, "to Mrs. Robinson's, on the other side of the street, who is too ill to go to church, and asked if they had seen anybody come to the house while we were out? I told her what a respect we had for Jane, but that now we suspected she had some bad connexions, and that we wanted to find it out, and save her, perhaps, from ruin. Mrs. Robinson's nurse said, she had seen a youth, maybe of nineteen or so, come to the house, and that he shook hands with Jane, and gave her something out of his pocket—it might be shoes, but she could not say: they stood talking together at the door, maybe half an hour; and that Jane had gone into the house twice, and left him standing there, maybe to look after the roast, or to fetch him something. Now all this is very unpleasant," continued Miss Agatha; "it has destroyed all our confidence in her."

"To be sure it has! Well, and what have you done?" asked the two visitors.

"I wanted to give her notice immediately to leave," said the elder sister.

"I thought we had better wait and find out something more," said the younger, "because we do not wish to commit Mrs. Robinson's nurse, who says she knows Jane's stepmother, and that she is a very bad, violent woman."

The two visitors inquired Jane's family name, and then, both repeating "Ford," and finding that it furnished no idea on which to comment, Miss Agatha resumed—"We mean to go on just as if nothing was

amiss, because this will put her off her guard, and so we may find her out."

"It's a shocking thing, though," interrupted Miss Cotterill, "to have bad people coming about the place. That little hump-backed thing, and the young boy, as she called him, coming the next morning while we were out, can mean no good; it has a very bad look-out—that it has!"

After this, the four ladies talked long on the natural depravity of servants, and concluded that, however modest and honest and unexceptionable Jane's general conduct might be, there must be something fatally wrong, when little deformed women, and young boys pretending to be shoemakers, came after her.

All this time poor Jane was in the greatest state of anxiety, for Mark Griffiths had brought her word that her stepmother had applied for parish relief, complaining violently of the desertion of her husband, and that he would most probably be advertised on the Wednesday as a runaway from his family; and by this means, most probably, the Miss Cotterills would discover her unhappy connexions. What could she do? Nothing but cry quietly to herself; and when her mistresses, who were now doubly watchful of every circumstance, inquired into the cause, reply, by a little falsehood, that she had such a bad cold. No wonder that she had a cold, replied the Miss Cotterills—who, although they meant to give her no hint of their present discoveries, could not resist the opportunity for reproof—people who stood talking at street doors were sure to get colds.

The Miss Cotterills joined with some of their friends for the Wednesday paper, which came to them, therefore, on the Friday. Jane could not help glancing over the advertisements before she took it into the parlour, and felt ready to faint when she saw there the fearful paragraph, accompanied by its rude cut of the run-

away, with the bundle on his back and the gallows in the distance. She folded the advertisements into the inside, and then, quietly opening the parlour-door, laid the paper on the sideboard without a word. The Miss Cotterills, however, were not to be imposed upon: they knew that the paper was brought; they heard Jane go into the kitchen, and that looked odd; perhaps the "young boy" who had brought the shoes had been there again. They looked through the window: no—Mrs. Tottington's servant had brought it just as usual, and was now going on towards the market-place: it was odder still.

"Jane!" exclaimed both sisters at once, as the poor girl was quietly shutting the parlour-door again. Jane re-entered. "Why do you bring the paper in in that way? and why need you take it into the kitchen before you bring it in?"

Jane did not know what to say; there was something very severe in her mistresses' tone: their eyes were fixed sternly upon her. She felt as if she dared not tell the truth: if her mistresses had been less suspicious, she would have opened her whole heart to them, and have asked counsel from them in all her trouble and anxiety. She told the literal truth, however, when she said that she had washed her hands in the kitchen; but she exceeded it, and that was a pity, when she added "and that was all." Neither one sister nor the other believed her, and so they told her. It is a wretched thing to be suspected of falsehood, and Jane despised herself because she had burdened her conscience with a few untrue words.

"Oh, she is a bad artful girl!" exclaimed Miss Agatha; and, while she thus spoke, Miss Farnham knocked at the door. She entered, with news written on her countenance, and was cordially welcomed by both sisters.

"Oh, you've got the paper—that's right!—I have

something very particular to tell you;" and, taking up the paper, she opened to the advertisement side, and then, folding it into a quarto size, proceeded:—"Ford, you told me, was your new servant's name: do you know that she has some of the worst connexions in the world?"

"Gracious goodness!" exclaimed both Miss Cotterills.

"Shocking people these Fords are!" continued Miss Farnham; "the father was one of the most desperate leaders of the riots last autumn."

"Oh, Lord!" interrupted Miss Agatha; and her sister grew pale.

"People say," continued Miss Farnham, "that he ought to have been hanged. All last winter he was in hiding among dog-stealers, and pick-pockets, and housebreakers, for anything I know. He is a well-known character, and his wife is one of the most notorious women in the town. Mr. Bartram, in one of whose houses they have lived, gives a terrible account of them: there are a great many sisters, and one either was or ought to have been in the house of correction for stealing net from a warehouse where she was employed, and another was taken up for stealing money from some lodgers. Oh, you never in your life heard of such a nest of people. One sister, I believe, is deformed, and one or two others are no better than they should be.*

The Miss Cotterills were speechless, and had already visions before their mind's eye of terrible night-robbers let into the house by this artful servant girl; of them-

* We take it for granted that our readers are acquainted with our foregoing story of "Little Coin, Much Care," through which they have become familiar with the household of the Fords, and know, therefore, previously, all these circumstances to which Miss Farnham now refers, and which, even with but little misrepresentation or exaggeration, told so fatally against Jane's family.

selves being gagged, tied to bed-posts, if not fairly murdered in their beds, while the robbers made off with all their plate and other valuables. They were too much excited to say one word; and Miss Farnham, pointing now to the runaway advertisement, resumed:—"The father is now off, as you may see by this advertisement; and, when he is taken, will have to work in the tread-mill."

"Perhaps he's gone off on account of some robbery or murder," gasped poor Miss Cotterill, almost frightened to death.

"What shall we do?" asked Miss Agatha; "I was sure something was wrong: one never suspects without cause: suspicion is a sort of natural instinct. What shall we do?"

The two ladies clasped their hands, and looked panic-struck, whilst Miss Farnham sate holding the newspaper between her face and the fire, without offering one word of counsel. Poor Miss Cotterills! what was to be done? So good and kind, they said, as they had been to this girl; so highly as they had thought of her—so much as they wished to do for her—oh, it was quite terrible! Had they not taken her with them to church—and put her half a teaspoonful of tea extra into the pot—and, till they began to suspect her, did they ever lock the pantry door, which they always had done when Peggy was with them! Poor Peggy! they were quite sorry for her now; for her family, though poor, was respectable. Again they appealed to the visitor what were they to do?

Miss Farnham of all things loved to excite a sensation; therefore, she counselled them that the sooner they were rid of her the better. "Sacrifice," said she, "a month's wages, anything, rather than keep a person about you in whom you have no confidence, and whose connexions are so bad. Depend upon it," continued

she, "even if she be honest herself, she may be the dupe of the designing—you never can feel safe while she is in the house. Of course you must do what you think best, my dear Miss Cotterill," said she, tying her bonnet-strings preparatory to departing; "but my advice is—get rid of her!"

"Well, I'm sure we are exceedingly obliged to you," said both the Miss Cotterills; "and we shall certainly follow your advice. Mrs. Harper can come and be with us till we get suited; and this huzzy, with her deformed sisters and young shoemaker boys, may go about her own business!"

CHAPTER III.

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

"WELL, I do declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Griffiths that evening, as, while she sate seaming stockings by candlelight, she saw Jane Ford enter her room. "Why, sure you have not left your place!" added she, as Jane set her bonnet-box down on the floor, and a bundle on the dresser.

"Yes, I have, though," said Jane, who had evidently been crying. "Oh dear, dear! so as I tried to please! so as I wished to please, and to have stopped, at least, my year out!—but it's no manner of use fretting."

"Well but, Jane dear!" said kind Mrs. Griffiths, laying down her work, and raising her spectacles from her nose to her forehead, "I don't understand this!"

"Can Mark fetch my boxes to-night?" asked Jane, without giving the explanation her friend required; 'and will you let me stop here a night or two? Oh, Mark!" exclaimed Jane, in the next breath, as that youth, in his smith's apron, and with his hands and

face black from the forge—for Mark was a frame-smith—entered the room, "can you fetch me my two boxes from the Miss Cotterills?—the sooner the better, Mark."

"Why, bless me!" exclaimed Mark, in as much astonishment as his mother, "have you left your place?"

"How else should I want my boxes fetched?" said Jane, rather pettishly, for she was vexed by their astonishment—"I *have* left: that's the long and short of it, Mark; and, if you can't fetch me my boxes, I must get somebody else that can—that's all!"

"Oh, I'll fetch them," said Mark; "bless me! I'd do anything for you, Jane;" and, without stopping to wash either his hands or his face, or even to take off his apron, he walked with hasty steps to the Miss Cotterills, being convinced that they had behaved shamefully to Jane, and so there was no need for him to be over civil in fetching the boxes. It must be confessed, therefore, that the alarm of the two ladies regarding their late maid-servant's desperate connexions was no way abated by the appearance of an unwashed person, in a smith's apron, who came in no courteous spirit to do his errand.

"I'm glad she's out of the house, bag and baggage," said both sisters, as the door was closed upon Mark and the two ill-omened boxes—"What a hangman-looking fellow he is!"

By the bye, Mark Griffiths had a remarkably fine face, with an open cordial expression, although he was only a journeyman smith; but, then, he had a broad chest, and was of a tall muscular build; and, looking at him, the two single ladies thought of crow-bars, and keys that opened a street-door as if by magic.

When Mark set the two boxes on the floor of his mother's kitchen, he found Jane without her bonnet

and shawl, looking, as he thought, nicer than she had ever looked before; she was setting out some bread and cheese on the round table, and his mother was at work again. And here, perhaps, it may be as well to make an observation as to the change which is observable in the widow's house since the time we were first introduced to it, when the fever broke out, and Ford supported poor Griffiths home, and laid him on his straw bed—to die. The family of the Fords had, as we know, gone down sadly in the world since then; but things, on the contrary, had mended considerably with Mrs. Griffiths. In the first place, a brother—a maltster, of Lincoln, not a rich man, but a kind one—had settled on his widowed sister an annuity of seven shillings a-week. She had sunk two years of this as an apprentice-fee for her son, working hard and living sparingly the while. Heaven seemed to prosper her: her health was good; work, which was scarce in the town, seemed, however, never to fail her; and her son was steady, and dutiful, and clever: she thought the blessing of Heaven was upon her, and her heart was like a perpetual hymn of thanksgiving. For the last six months Mark had been out of his apprenticeship, and was receiving good wages, whilst she was again in the receipt of her seven shillings a-week. The Griffiths really were almost rich people. But we will now return to Mark, who, seeing Jane looking so neat and pretty, had no sooner washed himself in the back kitchen, than he went up stairs, and returned in his Sunday things, with his hair combed and brushed, and looking quite spruce. It was not his custom by any means to dress for supper; so, when he came down, his mother opened her large eyes, and exclaimed, "Bless us and save us!"

Mark fetched in a quart of ale, and they sate down to supper as merry as could be, and as if there were no Miss Cotterills in all the world; and then, when

supper was over, they pushed back the round table, put some more coal on the fire, and all three sate with their feet on the fender, "to talk over things"—the principal of which was Jane's future prospects—not forgetting her unfortunate family connexions; for there needed no secrecy with the Griffiths, and Jane wanted not only counsel but sympathy. The mother and son both sympathized with her; and Jane cried, and so did Mrs. Griffiths; and Mark stirred up the fire into such a blaze that they found the candle a supernumerary, and so put it out.

"I tell her," at length said Mrs. Griffiths, speaking rather to her son than to Jane, "that there's no great harm done. One service lost is, as one may say, only another found: and there's Mrs. Mainwaring, the preacher's wife, as good a Christian as ever lived, wants a servant at this very time."

"Small wages, though," said Mark.

Jane said she didn't care so much for wages, if she could only be comfortable, and not be sneered at and upbraided for her poor father's sake. Mark still said he didn't know, but he thought she might get a much better place; for Mark, since he had begun to receive good wages himself, was disposed to estimate the worth of a place by the amount of its remuneration. Jane, however, who knew that, after her shoe-bill was paid, she should hardly be able to call a shilling her own, was willing to take the first place that offered, provided it promised comfort; and, at Mrs. Griffiths' continued recommendation, it was resolved that, the first thing after breakfast on the morrow, she should be introduced to the Methodist preacher's wife, by Mrs. Griffiths, as a candidate for her service."

"Well, if you go, I shall see you every Sunday night at chapel," said Mark.

"I dare say," said Mrs. Griffiths, "you'll be ready

enough to go then!" Mark made no reply, and yet Jane blushed, and, with something of a conscious air, coughed behind the folded corner of her apron, which she held between her face and the great blazing fire which Mark had made.

It really was a very pleasant little *tête-a-tête*, that; and both Jane and Mark were quite astonished when Mr. Griffiths declared it to be past midnight.

There was no secret made with Mrs. Mainwaring, the preacher's wife, about Jane's unfortunate connexions. Mrs. Griffiths told all; and, to all appearance, it seemed as if the girl were only the more welcome on that very account. Mrs. Mainwaring talked about its being the best privilege of Methodism, to go to the highways and hedges, and save those who, otherwise, might be lost. There was something wonderfully mild and attractive in that young matronly, but somewhat too anxious countenance, smiling with eyes filled with Christian love and sympathy. Jane was won by it, and immediately declared she would take service with her, although she offered a whole pound less than the Miss Cotterills, and could not be prevailed upon to give more. Mark, when he heard it, said it was a bad day's work; but both his mother and Jane were satisfied.

That Methodist preacher's house was a very small one, consisting but of two rooms on a floor, and furnished in the simplest manner: it stood just at the outskirts of the town, and had a cheerful view into green fields, which, with good air, were all that could recommend it. There were four children, the eldest eight, the youngest in arms—Samuel, Barbara, Joshua, and little Annie. Jane, who was naturally fond of children, spite of the sickening she had had at the master-shoemaker's, was extremely touched by the first sight of this young household. Mrs. Mainwaring took her

into a room on the third story, which she called the nursery: the four children were altogether; Samuel sate on a stool by the cradle, where the youngest was sleeping, with a child's table before him, on which were books and a slate, for he was doing his lessons. Barbara was putting in a little patch, with the utmost exactitude, into a printed pinafore; whilst little Joshua was quietly amusing himself on the floor, with empty cotton-reels, walnut shells, and such like trifles. The children rose at sight of their mother and the new servant, but so softly, and spoke so low, that a person outside the door could hardly have imagined children to be there.

"Samuel and Barbara have been in part my nurses," said Mrs. Mainwaring, "since our servant left."

"And so young as they are!" said Jane.

"Our children are taught early to be useful," replied Mrs. Mainwaring; "to help one another—to give up something—to suffer even some inconvenience for the well-being of the family; which, after all, is but their duty."

"Annie woke up once," said Samuel, "and I rocked her to sleep again."

"Joshua has been very good and quiet," said Barbara, "and has never once sucked his hand; and I've mended this hole in my pinafore: see, mother."

The mother looked at the work and commended it; and little Joshua clasped his mother's knees affectionately, without saying a word. "This is our new servant, children," said she; "but I have something more to say to her yet; so sit down to your work again. Joshua may go with us, and when Annie wakes, call me." Jane took up little Joshua into her arms, and kissed him, and went down stairs again with the mother.

"Don't you like her, Barbara?" asked Samuel, as soon as they were out of the room.

"Oh yes!" replied Barbara, with energy; "and she seemed so good to Joshua—I like her very much."

"Don't tell her," said Samuel, with tears in his eyes.

"Tell her what?" asked Barbara; adding, the next moment, "oh yes, I know."

"I wish she had not come till next week," said the boy; "what shall I do, Barbara? Ask mother not to tell her—do, Barbara, dear!" said he, just ready to cry.

Barbara said she would, and went down stairs. Scarcely was she gone, when Jane herself came into the room. She said there was a gentleman who had called, in the parlour with his mother, and that she had come up to see after the baby; "but why are you crying, love?" asked she, seeing tears in the poor fellow's eyes.

How was it that Samuel, who had just sent his sister down to the mother to beg her to keep this fearful *something* from the knowledge of the new servant, felt, the moment she spoke so kindly to him, as if he could open his whole heart to her. He wondered how it was, and yet it seemed almost a relief to tell her. "I think I can tell you," he said; "for perhaps it is right you should know. I am in disgrace in the family."

"In disgrace! you that are so good!" exclaimed Jane.

"I've been very naughty," said Samuel; "father said, that for all this week I must not take my meals in the family; I've had only bread and water and oatmeal porridge for these four days; and I have it here by myself;" and the poor boy cried bitterly.

"Poor, dear child!" said Jane, and kissed him; pitying him because she thought his father must be so severe a man.

Barbara saved me a bit of rice-pudding one day," said Samuel.

"I'll save you some," said Jane, "and a bit of meat beside."

"No, no! indeed, you must not," replied Samuel; "mother would send you away if you did, and father would punish me more. I'll tell you how I got into this disgrace. Our last servant was Susan; she wasn't kind to us children; she lived with us three or four months, ever since we came here, and went to chapel, and came in so regularly for prayers, and father and mother thought her so good, you can't think: she used to take us out walks in an afternoon after her work was done, as you will; and she often went to houses and about, and made us promise not to tell, or else she would beat us. We were so afraid of her, for one day she did beat Barbara, and she was so strong, and got into such passions! Father and mother found her out at last, and so she was to leave; and, last Friday—father was at home last week—she told me to ask mother to let her take us out in the afternoon. Joshua and Barbara had colds, and so they didn't go out, but only baby and I; and, instead of taking us into the park, as she said she would, she took us to a dancing-show, and made me promise never to tell. I thought the show very pretty, and so I promised. Father, however, saw us come out of the show; it was very late in the afternoon, and when we got home, father came to the door to let us in, and asked, 'Where have you been?' Susan said, 'All round the park,' and pinched my arm. I knew what she meant, but I didn't speak one word. It was a long way, Susan said, all round the park, and that baby was so heavy, and I was tired, and so we had walked slow. 'Dare you tell me so!' said my father, just in the tone he speaks in when he is angry. 'You may ask Samuel,' said she, 'if you don't believe me;' and then she pinched my arm again. I was afraid Susan would beat me if I

told the truth; and so I said, 'Yes, father, we've been all round the park.' 'And nowhere else?' asked my father? Susan bounced into the house, and gave the baby to mother, and said she wouldn't stop another minute in the house. I was so frightened, I did not know what to do; my father took me into the parlour, and set me between his knees and said, 'Have you been nowhere else, Samuel?' I wanted to say yes, but I said, no. Oh dear, oh dear!" said the poor child, with a countenance growing quite pale, "I never shall forget how my father looked! He beat me, far worse than Susan beat Barbara, and then took me into his study, and then called in my mother and Barbara, and told them where I had been, and how I had denied it. I think the day of judgment must be like that day: my mother cried, and so did Barbara, and then my father read in the Bible all about wicked people who had told lies, and how Ananias and Sapphira dropped down dead, with falsehood on their tongue. I thought, perhaps I should die too in that way. I dropped down on my knees, and prayed God to forgive me, and to have mercy upon me; my father knelt down beside me, and prayed too. I think I am forgiven, Jane," said the boy, a moment or two afterwards; "my father said he thought so too, but that I had sinned against man as well as against God, by telling a falsehood, and that, therefore, I must suffer outward punishment and disgrace; and so, for all this week," added he, in a lower tone, "I may not eat with the family, nor of what they eat—that's all, Jane. I shall never tell any stories again. I thought at first I would not tell you, but I'm glad I have. You will not love me less, will you—nor think worse of me for it?"

"I don't know how it is," said Jane, wiping her eyes, "but I love you a deal better for it. I'm sure I wish I could make you a little pudding unbeknown to anybody."

Barbara at this moment came into the room, and the baby woke. Jane took it up, and Barbara whispered to her brother, "I've been waiting all this time, and I think Mr. Walker never will go!"

"Never mind," said Samuel; "I've told her all myself, and I feel a deal easier in my mind; let's now go into the back yard and play."

Jane did not find it possible to make a little pudding for Samuel, *unbeknown*, as she said, to anybody. Mrs. Mainwaring took stricter oversight of every domestic movement, even than the Miss Cotterills had done. There was not an ounce of flour, a particle of rice, nor a spoonful of milk, that could be used unobserved. "No one knows what economy is," said Mrs. Mainwaring to her handmaiden, "who has not lived in the family of a Methodist preacher; the lessons which you learn with me, Jane, will be useful to you all the rest of your life." Jane thought so too. Economy and severe regularity were the governing principles of that small household; nothing was wasted, not even a second of time; every one knew his duty, and the exactness with which the fulfilment of every duty was enforced made all move like clockwork. Day after day, and week after week brought the same routine; and if, to active and impatient spirits, this very recurrence of routine would have been wearisome, it had likewise this advantage, that it became habit, which is only a second nature. To an observer interested in the true philosophy of life, how much could have been learned in the study of that household! He would have seen how far a little may be made to go, if people know only how to use that little aright; how self-denial, and the preferring of others rather than ourselves, are not virtues of such difficult practice, even to children and servants. Every other week Mr. Mainwaring was from home on his duties as itinerant

preacher; during the week of his absence, the table was spread even more sparingly: Jane's skill in cooking sufficed for the mother and children; but when he was at home, the wife herself took part in this, and the children, quiet and obedient as they generally were, during this time were doubly so, lest the father, who studied in his own room, should be disturbed. There was something stern in the Mainwarings, both father and mother, and yet the mother was one whose heart naturally overflowed with love; her narrow circumstances, however, and sense of duty, made her severe, and, as regarded the children, made her enforce the discipline which her husband enjoined with unyielding sternness.

After Jane Ford had lived in the family twelve months, she came to be regarded as somewhat more than a servant; the children loved her tenderly, and Mr. and Mrs. Mainwaring, pleased by her uniform good conduct, and regular attendance at chapel, where she never failed to join in the hymn—let it not be asked how much Mark Griffiths' admiration of her singing occasioned this—made the pious hearts of the preacher and his wife rejoice. Much had they striven for the reformation of Jane's family; the preacher had visited them, had prayed with them and for them, and so had his wife; they had lent them sermons and religious tracts, but all to no purpose. Ford drank just as much as ever; the step-mother declared it was no manner of use their preaching to her, for she must have her drop of gin. Mima and Rachel loved dress just as much as ever; no one, in fact, would listen—no one, in fact, would be at home when they came, unless it were poor little Letty, with the baby Sally in her arms; and she, the good people looked upon, for some time, as a brand plucked from the burning, and used every means in their power to comfort, if not to

improve. But here again a difficulty intervened: Mrs. Greaseley, Letty's kind old friend, was a church-woman, and would much rather her *protégé* read Church of England prayers than any other let them be what they would; and poor Letty, who had good reason to follow Mrs. Greaseley's advice, appeared so seldom at the chapel, and read to such little purpose the tracts and sermons that were lent her, that at length even she was given up as hopeless. Discouraging, however, as were their attempts with Jane's family, the good preacher and his wife only renewed their efforts more warmly, for what they considered her salvation: they thought they could almost compass land and sea, to make her a proselyte, and they hoped they had done it. Everything, therefore, that they could do to make her comfortable was done; not certainly in the way of presents, or indulgences of going out to tea with her friends, or having her friends to take tea with her, or even by increasing her wages, but by kindness and consideration; almost confidence and friendship were shown to her by the heads of the house, whilst the children loved her with the most openhearted and joyous affection.

Jane could not be otherwise than happy in this servitude. Little Joshua, though a very different child to her little brother Stephen, who died of the fever, seemed, however, almost to fill the vacuum which his loss had left in her heart. "I thought I never should love a child again, after poor Stephen died," said she to Barbara; "yet, someway or other, I love Joshua almost as well."

"We have never been so happy in all our lives, Jane, as we have been since you lived with us," returned the little girl; "Samuel and I both pray for you every night; and, do you know, we pray God that you may never leave us." "I never will leave you," said Jane,

speaking in the fulness of her heart. The little girl was perfectly happy; told her brother what Jane had said—but he had never once imagined that she would leave them; told her mother also, who, knowing poor servants better than her daughter, was greatly pleased also, and that very evening proposed to Jane, that she should remove with them to their new destination, let it be where it would, and which would be decided by the Conference of that same summer, they then having abode their two years in that town—the term of a Methodist preacher's residence in one place. Jane was a little taken by surprise by this proposal; still, the prospect was not an unpleasing one; a journey with a family she liked, a residence in a new place—there was novelty in it, and she readily agreed.

Mrs. Mainwaring told her one intimate Methodist friend, Sister Burder, as she was called, and they both agreed that nothing could be better than this arrangement. "I was afraid," said Sister Burder, "she would have been leaving you on account of wages; did she ask for no advance?" "No," replied Mrs. Mainwaring; "I myself expected that—servants so soon eat of the tree of knowledge: I was afraid even of your servants, in this respect." "I have warned them," said Mrs. Burder, who was rather rich, and kept three servants, "never to tell Jane what wages they have. She is a good girl, however, and a jewel of a servant; I shall give her a new gown myself, one of these days."

Mrs. Mainwaring was well pleased with the proposed liberality of her friend, and looked forward now to the journey after the Conference decision, with less anxiety than she had hitherto done.

One day, when Jane was walking out with the four children, Mark Griffiths joined them. He told Jane he had followed them all the way, for he had something to say to her. Jane coloured, and wondered to herself what

it was, while Mark thought she got prettier and prettier every day. He said he was going to leave Nottingham; that he was going to Sheffield, where he had an offer of better wages.

"Well, to be sure!" was Jane's exclamatory reply, and then she stooped down to fasten the clasp of Joshua's shoe. Mark said he was to set off next Monday, and that his mother would ask Jane's sisters, Rachel, Letty, and little Sally, to drink tea with her on Sunday, if she thought her mistress would let her come: he hoped she would, he said, for it would be such a time before they should drink tea together again. Jane of course said she hoped her mistress would; she did not know, however, for she had never asked such a thing. She said she was very sorry Mark was going, and she really did hope her mistress would let her take tea with his mother. She blushed very much again, but she looked sorrowful, which, odd as it may sound, pleased Mark not a little, for he was glad to think Jane liked him well enough to be sorry he was going. "I hope I shall get good wages in Sheffield," said he, "and then I shall come and see mother; and I shall be so proud, Jane, if you have not forgot me."

"Well, I hope missis will let me come," was Jane's reply.

Mark said he hoped she would, and his mother hoped so too; and that his mother thought she would like to see Rachel and Letty, and little Sally, and so she would ask them.

Mark walked on with Jane and the children, and, not forgetting the expression of her countenance when she heard he was going, began to tell her how much he had liked her, when they were two children in Bartram's Court together, and how he never should forget her as long as ever he lived; upon which, he took her hand. This in the open park, where people

were walking, and before the children too, Jane thought was not to be allowed; she snatched her hand away, and told him, he really must go, and that she would send his mother word the next day.

The little Mainwarings were not cunning children, and withal were as innocent as lambs; so they thought nothing of Mark's joining them, nor of Jane's peculiar manner, which, to anybody with any experience in life, or any suspicions, would have looked extremely like affection on both sides. Samuel, therefore, linked his arm on to Jane's, as soon as Mark had left them, and said, "He goes to chapel, Jane." Barbara said he often sate near their own pew, and often carried out little Joshua when he had dropped asleep: it was Mrs. Griffiths's son—she knew him very well.

"He's a particular friend of mine," said Jane; "and now he's going a long way off—to Sheffield."

"My uncle Hanbury lives at Sheffield," said Samuel; "I wonder whether he'll see him: he's a preacher too. Do you think he will go to his chapel, Jane?"

Jane said she could not tell, but she thought he perhaps would; she was sure he would, if he knew that he was their uncle, for Mark Griffiths knew how much she loved them.

The poor children were quite grateful; and Barbara, who had been walking with little Joshua, asked Samuel to take his hand now, that she might walk with Jane; for that she could not take her other arm, on account of the baby. Samuel did as his sister wished; and then Jane asked them if they thought their mother would let her drink tea with Mrs. Griffiths on Sunday. The children said they would ask; and accordingly, the moment they entered the house, they did so. Jane never felt so interested in a yes or a no in her life before, and on that account she carried the baby into the kitchen, to take off its things there. Mrs.

Mainwaring, who had her own private reasons for wishing her maid-servant not to have much intercourse with those out of her own family, was somewhat dissatisfied by the request, and would not give a positive answer. Jane got quite into a fever of impatience, and thought it would be very unkind if her mistress refused her this one favour—the only favour of the kind she had ever asked.

Mrs. Mainwaring turned the request over and over in her mind: this kind of out-of-doors intercourse she feared; she had always set her face against it. "Servants meet together thus, and compare wages and styles of living," said she to herself, "and mischief comes of it." She shall not go, reasoned the stern part of her nature; the kinder part suggested how faithfully Jane had served her; how she had never gone out to take tea with her friends before; how respectable a woman was Mrs. Griffiths, and a member of the Methodist connexion too. She questioned and questioned with herself, and at last resolved to be both kind and prudent—to warn Jane, yet to let her go.

She called Jane into the parlour, after the children were in bed, to sit down to work. The Bible and hymn book lay on the table; but Mrs. Mainwaring looked more thoughtful than common.

"You wish to take tea with your friends on Sunday," said she; "you may go—but of one thing let me warn you, Jane: I have seldom indulged a servant, even in small things, without receiving an ill return. I am sorry you have made this request: I wish you had not: and only because I have more than ordinary confidence in you, I grant it." Jane did not understand her mistress farther than that she permitted her to go, and warned her against ingratitude. She thought there was no danger of that; and, in the fulness of her heart, began to make warm professions.

"Actions, Jane," said her mistress, coolly, "are better than words: we will now read our evening portion of scripture." Mrs. Mainwaring read the history of Ruth; for she hoped the attachment of the young Moabitess to her mother-in-law might be a useful example to her handmaiden. Jane, however, thought much less of this than of the beautiful old love-story; which, though occurring so many thousand years ago, found an echo in her own secret breast.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEST NOT PERFECT.

THE next Sunday afternoon was as fine as a Sunday afternoon in May could be. Jane met Mark Griffiths and her sister Rachel, not far from her master's door, coming to meet her; and all three set off for a walk before tea—two of them as happy as if there were no partings in this world.

Tea stood ready in the widow Griffiths' kitchen by four o'clock—for she did not go to chapel that afternoon—when Letty and little Sally arrived. Good Mrs. Griffiths! she had twice swept up her hearth, and twice wiped out the tea-cups, lest any dust had settled in them, and a dozen times, at least, had looked at a letter, bearing the Bristol post-mark, which the postman had that very afternoon brought in, directed to "Jane Ford, to the care of Mrs. Griffiths." And now she was for the third time filling up the kettle, regretting that the tea would not be half so good, because the spirit would have boiled out of the water, when Letty, who sate peeping under the muslin blind of the window, with little Sally seated on the table before her, announced that the three were coming; and the

next moment they entered, looking so fresh and happy that it was a pleasure to see them. Little Sally was kissed, and Letty was kissed, and Mrs. Griffiths' hand was cordially shaken, before Jane was made aware that a letter from her brother had for certain arrived.

The tea-cakes, which had been kept hot in the oven, were buttered; and Mark bustled about to set the chairs, while Jane and Rachel hastily glanced over the letter. "Come, girls," said Mrs. Griffiths, as cheerful as could be, "sit you down, and drink a drop of tea, and take a bite, and then finish the letter." Jane, however, had to answer many questions about the contents of the letter while she was taking off her things, and even after she had sate down in the chair which Mark had kept for her next to himself, and had spread her clean pocket-handkerchief on her knee to keep the crumbs of the well-buttered and crisp tea-cakes from greasing her best gown. The letter, however had, some way or other, made Jane grave, although she protested it was "the cheerfullest and nicest letter in the world;" and so Mrs. Griffiths declared that not another word should be said about it till after tea.

The tea was capital, although the hostess contended that the spirit had boiled out of the water; and there was such plenty to eat, that nearly three quarters of a tea-cake were left, when everybody had done. Letty, poor child, thought what a heavenly thing it must be to go out to tea two or three times a week, as she had an idea of some people's doing; whilst little Sally, in her full enjoyment of three pleasures at once, good eating, and drinking, and warmth, added yet a fourth, and sank into balmy sleep in Letty's arms.

After tea, the shutters were closed, a candle lighted, and they all drew round the comfortable hearth, to hear as much of her brother's letter as Jane chose to

read. She glanced over, but omitted to read the first half, and then read aloud as follows :—

"I received your letter dated last January twelvemonth, and that is the latest news I have had directly from you. I need not tell you how earnestly I wish you well, nor how affectionately I love you. I was thinking over one day, twelve months ago, our happy childhood, when we gathered crocuses together in the meadows: and as I sate in the frame next day, I composed a poem on the subject: I would have sent it to you, but I had no private opportunity. I took to composing a deal of poetry, as I worked in the frame: it amused my thoughts, when otherwise I should have been wretched enough; but of this I have more to say presently. I left Tiverton eight months ago—which was a good day's work—and engaged myself to a Mr. Davenport, who had come over from the East Indies, on account of his health. I should have remained longer with him, but the time of his stay was over, and he would not let me return with him to Madras. He has been my kindest friend: with him I came to Bristol, and found myself there with five pounds in my pocket, and a good suit of clothes on my back. He encouraged me to read and improve my mind, and at his desire I copied out all the poems I had ever written. When he left he gave me a letter of introduction to the editor of the ———, the first paper here. From this gentleman I have received great encouragement. This week one of my poems will be published, and I hope he may be able to give me a situation on the paper, which he has half-promised. I already feel that I have powers of mind given me for great and good purposes; nor will I abuse these gifts. I will be no hireling, nor anything less than what God intended me for—an honest man; which the poet says truly, 'is his noblest work.'

"Since I wrote the above, a Mr. Jukes, who has read my poem in the ———, has sent for me. He is a gentleman of literary taste—the world says, a poet himself—although in trade. He said many complimentary things to me, and ended by offering me half a sovereign. Thank God! I have no need of charity, so I respectfully declined the money.

"I feel that I am making my way in the world. I will not go, therefore, to Canada, or the Cape, as I once thought of. Dear old England! I will stand by her and her noble sons to the last! Oh, that our poor dear mother could know my good fortune! I wrote a 'Sonnet to the Memory of a Beloved Mother,' a month or two ago, which I will give to the ———, because I think it one of my best poems. I will then send you a copy. I shall post you the ——— to-morrow, that you may see my first poem in print.

"Write to me 'To be left at the ——— Office, Bristol.'

"Give my love to father, Rachel, and Letty, and do not omit to kiss poor little Sally for me. My love to Mrs. G., and to Mark, both of whom will rejoice in my good fortune. I am, dear Jane, your affectionate brother, JOHN FORD.

"P. S. If I come to have any prosperity, I shall not fail to share it with those who are dear to me."

Jane wiped her eyes two or three times during the reading of this letter, which everybody agreed "was a very nice letter indeed;" and they all agreed, likewise, that there was just cause to rejoice in John.'s prospects, for that certainly a long vista of glory and profit was opening before him; whilst good Mrs. Griffiths protested that she had always thought he had a wonderful head-piece. She should like to know, she said, how many times she had told his poor dear mother so: and then she suggested to Jane, whether Mr. Mainwaring would not get some of John's poetry put into the Methodist Magazine. Lots of people read the Methodist Magazine in Nottingham; and it would be such a fine thing for them to know what John had done! Jane thought so too, and so did Mark Griffiths.

"There's a part of the letter," said Rachel, interrupting the conversation about the poetry, in which she had taken no part, "that Jane hasn't read; but I don't care your knowing it, and so I'll tell you myself. John has heard all about Mima Higgins, and he is afraid that she will make me no better than herself. He thinks I am getting no good at home—nor am I—but what can I do? I won't go out to service, and so it's no use John or anybody else urging it: I'm not like Jane; I shouldn't stop in my place a month! It's no pleasure to me," continued Rachel, seeing nobody inclined to answer her, "to stop at home: I can save no money; there's nothing but poverty and dirt and quarrelling at home; I hate the very sight of my own door! What am I to do?" asked Rachel again, the tears starting to her eyes, from passion rather than grief. Jane laid her hand kindly on her sister's arm, and Letty cried quietly to herself. "Just take a place, Rachel dear," said Jane; "it's not so bad as you fancy."

"I wish I could go to Australia," returned Rachel, "where women are so much wanted!"

"Oh, for goodness' sake, Rachel, don't talk so!" exclaimed both Jane and Mrs. Griffiths, in the same breath.

"Miss Lineham, the new dressmaker, in the market-place," said Rachel, "would take me, for five pounds, for three years, if anybody would find me clothes for that time; or for ten pounds, and find me clothes herself. I know lots of her girls, all so well dressed and so comfortable! What would I not give to be a dressmaker's apprentice—anything almost, but what I am!"

"Oh, Rachel, dear, don't talk so!" exclaimed Jane.

"There's no harm in talking so," returned Rachel; "I do wish it; for you don't know, Jane, what a miserable home I have! Lord, what a fool I am!" continued Rachel, determining not to cry, though the tears dimmed her eyes; "I look and look as I go along the streets, to see if I can't find some money. Mima Higgins, who everybody knows is not a good girl, gives me bad advice; but I am determined not to follow it. No, Jane, you needn't look so. I'm not going to do as Mima has done—I'll keep a good name, if it's only for poor mother's sake. But, oh!" continued she, in a tone of deep bitterness, "who, after all, shall say what he will do, or what he will not do, when he wants money? I pray God to keep me out of temptation: and yet, by one means or another, I must get my own living—but not by service: I must be a dressmaker—I've set my mind on it!"

Mrs. Griffiths, who always thought Rachel proud, and with whom, in fact, she was no favourite, found much to disapprove of in Rachel's speech: she made no remark, nevertheless.

"If I only got good wages," said Jane, sorrowfully, "I would help you—that I would, with all my heart!"

"And if I'd five pounds," said Mark, "I'd lend

them to you; and you could pay me again when you worked for yourself."

"Fine talking, Mark!" said his mother, with a very reproving glance at her son; "but, however," continued she, addressing Jane, "you don't get proper wages—five pounds a year for a girl like you!—why, that's nothing: there is not a shop-keeper's servant that does not get ten." Jane said she certainly should have left before, only the place was so comfortable, and she was so fond of the children. She had half promised, she said, to go with them to their next place of residence, after the Conference, and she had made no fresh agreement about wages. Mrs. Griffiths said she had not done well; and that, for her part, she thought Mrs. Mainwaring ought not in justice to wish her to stay so much to her disadvantage: everybody, she said, took care of their own interests—there was no harm in that: Mrs. Mainwaring did so, in keeping a servant like Jane at low wages; but a servant must do the best for herself; youth and strength did not come twice in a man's life, and it was everybody's duty to make hay while the sun shone. Mrs. Mainwaring could not blame her, nor could anybody, for getting the highest rate of wages which any one would give to a good servant." Jane remarked, that if she had received seven or eight pounds the last year, she could have spared something for poor Rachel.

"Fiddle-sticks-end of poor Rachel!", exclaimed Mrs. Griffiths, regardless that Rachel was sitting by: "take care of yourself, girl, and save for yourself against a rainy day. Rachel will get sense in time, and go out to service!"

"Never!" exclaimed Rachel; "I never shall; I have not temper good enough for service; I'm not like Jane, and there's none of us is like Jane: she's more of mother in her than any of us; and oh, Jane!"

said she, speaking with a tearful earnestness that went to her sister's heart, "if you would only stand in mother's place to me, and help me to leave home and get some respectable trade in my fingers, I should bless you to the day of my death!"

Jane wiped away her own tears, and, giving her hand to her sister, said she would help her all that ever lay in her power; that she would get as good wages as ever she could; and the first money that she could spare she would lend or give to her sister, in part, as apprentice-fee. Master Griffiths also, spite of his mother's disapproving glance, declared, that if he got good work in Sheffield, he also would lend something; and Letty, who during the last quarter of an hour had been trying to speak, but found no opportunity, said now, that she too had half-a-guinea in the Savings' Bank, which had been given to her by good Mrs. Greaseley, and she would ask permission to lend it also to Rachel. Jane kissed Letty, and Rachel called her a good little thing; and the hearts of all three were warmed with sentiments of generosity and affection.

Again Mrs. Griffiths turned to the subject of Jane's present servitude, and set before her, in as strong light as she could, the desirableness of amending her condition. She promised Jane to inquire out everywhere for a good situation for her; and Jane, on her part, promised to lose no time in giving her mistress warning to leave. Jane, at first, had demurred as to this: she proposed to remain till after Conference, and only give notice that she could not remove with them to another place. Mrs. Griffiths replied, that she understood the Methodist connexion there would not part with Mr. Mainwaring yet for two years; therefore, the sooner Jane left the better; and Jane promised accordingly.

Mark walked home with Jane. She wondered how it was he spoke so little to her all the way—never

considering that she herself likewise did not speak three words. Mark said, at parting, that he had nothing to give her for a keepsake but a ring which had been his grandmother's: it was pure gold, he said, and his grandmother had been a very good woman, had lived happily with her husband, and all her children had turned out well: so he hoped it would be a lucky gift for Jane, if she would only keep it for his sake. He scarcely stopped to be thanked; and, before Jane rang at the door, she stayed at least three minutes to wipe away the tears with which this unexpected little parting gift had filled them.

She came home, nevertheless, in good time. It was only ten minutes past nine when she entered, and she had cleared all the supper things away before the parlour-bell rang for prayers.

The next morning, while Jane was preparing dinner, Mrs. Griffiths made her appearance. She had come about a newspaper—the one from John, no doubt—which the postman had that morning brought, and for which he demanded sixteen shillings and some odd pence. There was writing inside the paper, the man said, and therefore it cost so much. It was impossible to receive the paper at that price; but what a mortification that was! for thus she should never see the poem John had written. Mrs. Griffiths said, perhaps Mr. Mainwaring would call at the post-office about it: they would, maybe, let him have it without paying. Jane said she was sure her master would do anything he could for her; and her mistress coming in the kitchen at that moment, Jane told her the dilemma of the newspaper, and showed her also her brother's letter. Mrs. Mainwaring was quite enthusiastic about the letter, about its writer, and about the newspaper he had sent: they would get it for her, if possible, she said, and Jane must immediately write to her brother.

to warn him of the error of writing in newspapers. Jane should have time to write, she said; more especially as such a brother as John seemed to be was not to be found every day. Mr. Mainwaring did all in his power to obtain the newspaper from the post-office, but to no purpose; without sixteen shillings and eightpence it was not to be had. To console her, however, for this, Mr. Mainwaring said, if her brother would send him some poetry, and he approved it, he would certainly get it printed in the Methodist Magazine, and that would be better than writing in newspapers.

The kindness of the Mainwarings, and the lively interest they seemed to take about her brother, went to Jane's heart. Every act of kindness from them made it more difficult for her to give warning to leave; yet, every time she saw Mrs. Griffiths, the necessity of so doing was impressed upon her, whilst Rachel became almost importunate. "Well, I don't believe you ever mean to get money to help me," said Rachel, at last; "and, to tell you the truth, I never thought you would!"

Jane felt it very unkind of Rachel to say so; yet, why did she not give Mrs. Mainwaring notice? Why not put herself in a condition to accept one of those many places of good wages which Mrs. Griffiths told her of? Jane almost wished that Mrs. Mainwaring would take to scolding, as her former mistresses had done, that she might have some plea on which to speak. She determined, therefore, to open her heart to her, and ask her consent to leave, rather than insist on leaving. Day after day, however, went on, and Jane still put off speaking till the morrow.

She was pondering with herself, and knitting a stocking, one afternoon, with the four children playing about her, when Barbara, who was making straight

the kitchen drawers, suddenly began:—"I am so glad you are going with us when we leave!—I wonder where we shall go next!"

"I remember so well our coming here," said Samuel, "and all the journey from Whitehaven: we had no servant with us, and Joshua was so ill in the night—and Annie wasn't born—it was so uncomfortable!"

"Father was outside the coach," said Barbara, "and we were inside, mother and us three children. There was an old gentleman and a lady too in the coach, and we were so hot and crowded. Father came, whenever the coach stopped, to see how we were; and, at last, he took Samuel outside: do you remember, Samuel?"

Samuel said he remembered it very well, and remembered too how poorly he was, for he was just beginning of the measles, and so was Joshua; but nobody knew, till they got to Nottingham, what was amiss with them, and he did not like to complain, because poor Joshua was so troublesome, and their mother was so tired. Barbara said their next journey would be a deal pleasanter, because Jane would be with them, and they were all bigger now, and quite well.

The children threw their arms round Jane's neck, and kissed her, and said she did not know how fond they were of her. "Well!" they exclaimed, "it was the queerest thing that ever was, that Jane should begin to cry!" Jane did not tell them why she cried, but determined that very night to open her heart to their mother.

How difficult it is to do the very simplest thing, when we have long procrastinated it! Jane felt almost sick as she knocked that night at the parlour-door, after the children were gone to bed, and asked permission to speak to her mistress. Mrs. Burder had just left her; and, having told Mrs. Mainwaring

that the Methodist body in Nottingham would certainly petition Conference to let Mr. Mainwaring remain where he was, she looked quite happy. Jane did not begin on her own business the moment she entered; and, her mistress not noticing how troubled she looked, said cheerfully to her, "I can tell you something, Jane, that will certainly please you—we are not likely to leave Nottingham. You may thus stay among your own friends."

"I am very glad," said Jane—"on your account, at least;" she would have added; but Mrs. Mainwaring, full of her own satisfaction, continued, "That constant change to which a preacher's family is subjected has always been painful to me—it impresses on my mind so sorrowfully, that here indeed we have no abiding city. I can look round with pleasure on our small rooms, which have begun to look like home. We had a painful journey from Whitehaven here—the children ill, and myself unfit for the journey; and, although our next must have been less irksome, still I dreaded it. I bless God that he has vouchsafed a gracious answer to my prayers!"

"Oh, dear, ma'am," said Jane, "I've had something on my mind a long time to tell you."

Mrs. Mainwaring, who had been looking for Jane's proselytism, thought a confession of it was now coming, and bade her, very kindly, to sit down. Jane did not sit down, but continued to speak—"I hope, ma'am, what I am going to say won't make you angry—but my family's very poor: I want to raise a little money towards Rachel's going to dress-making. There's nobody they can look to so naturally as me. I must try to get as good wages as I can. I hope you won't be displeased," said Jane, seeing a change come over her mistress's countenance; "I have wanted to tell you for so long, but someway I couldn't make my mind up to

it. My wages are but small here," continued the poor girl, tremulously; "but I am so fond of the place, and especially of the children, that I wouldn't have left, only for helping Rachel."

"I knew how it would be, Jane," said Mrs. Mainwaring, coldly, "when I gave you permission to go out to tea that afternoon. This is always the case! Mrs. Griffiths ought to have known better than have made you dissatisfied with your place, Jane."

"Mrs. Griffiths," said Jane, not quite adhering to the truth, "had nothing to do with it. John thinks, as you saw in his letter, just as I do—that Rachel ought not to be at home. She won't go to service: there's no harm in being a dressmaker—that's what she wants; and I only wish I had the money to put her out to-morrow. Everybody knows," continued Jane, "that poor people wish to better their condition."

"Yes," returned Mrs. Mainwaring, "you may take service, Jane, where you'll get higher wages; but will you be as comfortable?—will you be as much out of the way of temptation?—will you, after all, be able to save much out of your high wages?—for servants that get high wages get extravagant notions, and spend their money as it comes, in folly. But I must say, Jane," added her mistress, in a cold and angry voice, "this is a return from you which I did not expect—which I have not deserved; and Mrs. Griffiths, I say it again, has stepped out of her duty to counsel you thus."

"Oh dear, ma'am, don't blame Mrs. Griffiths," said Jane; "what I have done is out of my own head!"

"You have not used me well, Jane, in this affair," returned her mistress; "and I am extremely hurt by your conduct." The manner of Mrs. Mainwaring told Jane that the conference was ended; and, dissatisfied with the impression she had made, she sate down in

the kitchen, and thought that servant-girls, even in the best of places, were the most miserable beings in the world.

As soon as breakfast was over next morning, Mrs. Mainwaring went to Mrs. Griffiths. It was a usual thing for her to call, in the most friendly manner, on the poor of their congregation, and they all received her gladly. She began at once to speak of Jane Ford. It was a pity, she said, that she would leave them, they were all so much attached to her; and, if she gained less wages with them, might she not, even out of that little, save as much as in expensive families, where there was rivalry in dress among servants? Living with them, she said, was not like servitude: it was more like being one of the family. Could not Mrs. Griffiths, therefore, give Jane a little good advice? She (Mrs. Mainwaring) knew that Mrs. Griffiths had influence with Jane, and she hoped she would use it, both for Jane's own good, and to oblige the preacher's whole family.

Mrs. Griffiths was naturally an independent-minded woman, and she replied, that nobody had a higher respect for Mrs. Mainwaring and her family than she had; but she must make free to say that, as far as money went, Jane Ford might better herself. Jane was very comfortable, and always spoke in the highest terms of the place; and, perhaps, she herself was a little to blame about Jane's leaving—she had counselled her to do so; for it was everybody's duty to do the best for themselves: she hoped Mrs. Mainwaring would not take it amiss, but she had advised Jane to leave. It did not always follow, she went on to say, that because servants got high wages they must be extravagant—look at Mrs. Burder's servants: and she herself had saved a deal of money in service, and always in high families.

Mrs. Mainwaring was displeased, and took a hasty leave; trying, as she went home, to prejudice her mind against her handmaiden, who, after all, had told a falsehood, in saying Mrs. Griffiths had no hand in her leaving. "I shall get another as good as she," said she to her husband, as she concluded the history of this domestic affair to him; "for after all, you see, she is not to be believed, nor is so much attached to us as we thought."

"What did father mean in his prayer to-night?" asked Samuel of Barbara, who, having sate up to supper, were bid to go to bed without the attendance of Jane; "he spoke of some one who had stepped from the right path, and over whom the angels in heaven had wept—who does he mean?"

"I don't think he meant either you or me, Samuel," returned his sister; "I'm sure he didn't mean mother, and I don't think it can be Jane—I wonder who it can be!"

Dear children! they had easy consciences, so they laid their heads down on their pillows, and slept calmly. Not so poor Jane: she knew the words in the prayer to be addressed to her. She believed she had done right; yet, feeling someway as if she had done wrong, and troubled by the cold averted looks of her mistress, she passed many sleepless hours.

Considering the very indifferent and inexperienced servants people generally get for 5*l.* a year, no one need be surprised at Mrs. Mainwaring's vexation and regret to part with Jane Ford. Why she was afterwards so angry and unreasonable towards her, we can only explain by saying, that she, good woman as she was—and she really was an excellent woman—had her weaknesses like everybody else. She wished it would enter into Sister Burder's head—for to Sister Burder she, of course, had told all, dwelling no little upon the

low wages being the true cause, and saying, moreover, how mortifying it was to those in narrow circumstances to be ever thus circumvented by those who had plenty. Well, good woman, she wished all this would put it into Sister Burder's mind to offer, out of her abundance, an additional two or three pounds to Jane's wages: she had volunteered, one day, to give her a new gown. But no: Sister Burder made no offer of that sort; she only gave the advice, that as Jane would leave, she would make her, if she was her servant, do a good deal of work before she went; and, as the Conference was now coming on, and the Methodists, out of respect to their preacher and his wife, would repaper and repaint their house, that it should be all done while Jane stayed, and Mr. Mainwaring was from home; and that, during this season of domestic bustle, she, Sister Burder, would take the two younger children to her own house, and set her own maid, Ann, at liberty to attend to them.

Poor Mrs. Mainwaring was disappointed, however, but she could not show disappointment to the wealthy sister; so she indemnified herself by treating Jane as an offender, with coldness and severity.

"Mother says," said Barbara one day, when the mother was out, "that we are not to sit with you in the kitchen, nor talk to you, as we used to do; because," added she, with some hesitation, "you don't speak the truth always."

"Oh Jane," said Samuel, looking up from his copy-book, "I didn't think you would have left us!"

"You know, Jane," resumed Barbara, who had something of her mother's disposition in her, "it is so wicked to tell untruths; and you said, you know, that you would go with us. You know you said so, Jane, and that you would never leave us!"

"I do think, if you loved us very much, you would

not go," said poor Samuel, brushing away two large tears from his eyes, that they might not blot his copy-book.

"Why," asked Jane, taking refuge in the unkindness of his mother, "am I never now to nurse and play with the little ones? Why is Mrs. Burder's maid to take care of them now, when I'm sure, though there is so much to do in the house, I'd get up at four o'clock in a morning to work, rather than never to see them, in this way! I'm sure I've always done all that ever I could to please missis, and to make you all love me," said Jane; "and I do love you, children, dearly," added she the next moment, as she saw a great tear fall on Samuel's copybook, and blot the fair large-hand copy he was still writing; "and my heart aches," continued she, "to kiss poor little Joshua and the baby; and yesterday, when I wanted to kiss him, your mother snatched him away just as if I had been poison!"

"Why didn't you stay with us?" asked Barbara.

"I wanted," replied Jane, "to get more money than your mother can afford to give; I have poor relations that I want to help. Heaven knows that it's for no bad purpose I want higher wages! But I shall be heartily glad when next week is over, and I am out of the house; for, so as I loved you, children, I never thought to have been so unkindly treated by any of you: and then, to have Joshua snatched away from me, and so as he cried! I shall be glad when I'm gone—and so as I used to think it would break my heart to leave you," said Jane.

Samuel jumped up from his chair, never heeding, poor boy, that in so doing he turned the little ink-bottle over his copybook, and clasped Jane round the neck, sobbing violently; whilst Barbara even laid her head on the table at which she was sitting, and cried too.

"Well, I suppose this is all very wrong," at length said Jane, who had sate down on a box in the room, and taken Samuel, though he was nearly ten years old, on her knee; "I've no right to be here, I suppose, talking in this way to you; but, however, the angels in heaven love one another; Christ told his disciples to love one another, and what have we done more than that? So I trust after all that there is no great harm done."

The time of Jane's servitude at the preacher's now drew to an end; but we have omitted to say, that Mrs. Griffiths, although she had incurred the displeasure of the preacher and his wife, by her interference, had abated no whit in her zeal on Jane's account. She had obtained for her a place at a manufacturer's, where she was to have 9*l.* a year wages—a golden prospect as it seemed! She was to leave Mr. Mainwaring's on the Saturday night, and go to her new place on the Thursday, having thus an interval of several days to repair and refit, as far as her small means would allow, her scanty wardrobe.

All now was neat and clean at the preacher's; new papered walls, new painted doors, clean hangings and covers to all the beds. The very atmosphere of the house seemed fresh; and Mrs. Mainwaring thought with pleasure of her husband's return to his home, of which the aspect was so improved, and of which as yet he knew nothing. If Jane only had not been leaving, all would have been right, so Mrs. Mainwaring thought, but she took care not to show this sentiment outwardly.

Jane was up in her own garret putting her things together ready for her departure, and wondering with herself who she must get to fetch her boxes away, now Mark was gone, when Samuel entered her room on tiptoe. He had several little things in his hand, made of coloured paper. He was very clever in folding paper into all kinds of forms—cases for pens, puzzles, boxes,

purses, boats, and such things; he would amuse his brothers and sisters for hours in this way; and now he came in on tiptoe, as if he was afraid of being heard. His face and eyes were very red, as if he had been crying, and his lips quivered as he looked at Jane. Without saying a word, he put the little keepsakes he had brought into her hand, and then a little purse of white paper, bordered with blue; Jane had never seen anything of his making so pretty before; there was something within it; she opened it: it was a shilling. Poor dear Samuel! she would have clasped him to her heart and kissed him, and blessed him again and again, but the poor lad was stealing softly down the garret stairs, and, as she heard his mother's voice below, she did not call him back. She loosened the cords of her box and put in his little gifts, while the tears streamed from her eyes; and she felt now, as she always thought she should feel at parting, as if her very heart would break. Some way, however, thought she, as she came down the garret stairs, and passed the door of the children's room, I cannot help loving Samuel better than Barbara. That same moment the room door was softly opened, and Barbara, her face quite red with weeping, likewise thrust hastily a little paper parcel into her hand, with an air of mystery equal to her brother's, and then giving her a kiss, was hastily retreating into the nursery again, when Samuel rushed out, and in a voice unusually strong and loud for him, "Good bye, dear Jane, if you really are going!" "Good bye, Jane!" said Barbara, following him out. Jane set down her bonnet-box, and kissed them, and bade them farewell most affectionately, telling them she was quite sure and certain the new servant would love them as dearly as she did, and be good to them also.

No sooner had she got into the little passage below stairs than Mrs. Burder's Ann came out of the parlour

with the two younger children. Joshua screamed for joy to see her, and so did little Annie. Jane snatched up the fat little fellow, and kissed him, while he clasped her tight round the neck, and declared he never would leave her. Why did Mrs. Mainwaring, who came to the parlour door at that moment, look so cold and severe, and tell Mrs. Burder's Ann to take the two little ones into the children's room? We will not inquire too narrowly into her motives, for she was then angry, and people, when they are angry, so often act unkindly.

Jane said she would carry up Joshua; Mrs. Mainwaring said no, Joshua was to go up stairs with Ann. The little fellow was the most wilful of all the young Mainwarings; he had not seen Jane for more than a week, and he would not leave her arms. The mother insisted; the child refused to obey; it was then a question of obedience or disobedience, and Mrs. Mainwaring, who enforced obedience by the bitter administration of the rod, compelled him to leave Jane, and then whipped him severely, the poor child screaming most violently all the time, because he knew not why he was punished, his small experience having ever taught him that Jane was a person to cling to and to love.

The child was whipped and made submissive by suffering, and was then taken up stairs by his mother. Jane, who never in her life before had sympathized so deeply with the sufferings of a child, felt almost to dislike her late mistress, and, wiping away her tears with the corner of her shawl, stood at the window with her back towards her, and her bonnet-box on the floor, when Mrs. Mainwaring re-entered. Poor Mrs. Mainwaring! she knew she had acted thus from passion, and she was not at peace with herself. She gave, however, good advice to Jane; but that good advice had lost its unction. Jane thanked her "for many favours;" but said she should never forgive herself for having so innocently caused little Joshua to be whipped just at

the last minute; and she was sure Mrs. Mainwaring herself would be sorry for it; and then, taking up her bonnet-box and wiping her eyes again with her shawl, she said, "Good bye," almost inaudibly.

CHAPTER V.

CHANGE FOR THE WORSE.

Mrs. Griffiths welcomed Jane with bad news. The manufacturer to whose family she was engaged had become bankrupt; the lady was ill in bed, and she wished now to be released from the engagement to Jane. Jane of course could demand a month's wages; but would she do so? Jane said, if she could get another service directly she would not, considering the unhappy circumstances of the family.

Poor Jane was sadly out of spirits—parting with the little Mainwarings had quite overset her. She opened Barbara's little packet, and found in it a new housewife, upon the making of which Jane knew she had prided herself so much, and which was intended as a present for Mrs. Burder. How would the child excuse to her mother the having given it away to her? She could not help blaming herself for loving Barbara less than Samuel; she then turned to the little paper purse and the shilling. "I won't part with this shilling," said she, "unless to save my own life;" and then she busied herself for a whole hour in scratching upon it, with her sharp-pointed scissors, the letters S.M. to J.F. When this was done, she put the purse and the shilling into a painted cotton-box, with a sliding lid, in which she kept her few valuables—her mother's silver thimble, Mark Griffiths's grandmother's ring, and two or three little things that had been given her for fairings.

It is not, we can assure our readers, at all a pleasant thing to be out of service more than a week or two at

a time. To say nothing of the fear your friends should think you a burden to them, there is a consciousness that you are not adding anything to your little savings, if you have any, or getting any money, if you happen to have none. You are sure also that plenty of people want servants, if you could only find them out. Are you, however, a housemaid? at that very moment nobody seems to want anything but cooks and nursemaids; or if you chance to be a nursemaid, as far as you are concerned, there might be no children in all the world; but when, add to this, you have a father, or brother, or sister, whom you are most anxious to oblige, who want to borrow a part of your prospective wages, then you may have a little idea of Jane's state of mind at the commencement of the third week of her being out of place, a boarder and lodger, without means of payment, with the person with whom, of all others in the world, she wished to stand well on the score of independence.

"Never trouble yourself, Jane, lass," said good Mrs. Griffiths, nevertheless; "I am not within a mouthful of victuals to you any day! Your father and mother befriended me and mine when we were in bitter need; and, besides all this, your work is worth your meat any day!"

Jane tried to cheer up, and was more assiduous than ever in darning stockings with Mrs. Griffiths.

Next door lived a char-woman, who was employed most of her time at the White Lion Hotel: she was a very neighbourly sort of woman, and promised Jane to help her to a place if she could. She came in one evening, and without any preamble began, "Now's your time, Jane Ford, if you want a capital service!" and then she went on to tell how a Captain Somebody and his lady, who were travelling with two servants, had stopped a day at the White Lion, in consequence of the sudden illness of the lady's maid; that the doctor had advised her returning to London, which was her

home, and she was going with the coach that night; that the lady would engage another immediately, and that, the day after the following, they would proceed on their journey. She told how she had spoken a good word for Jane; that the wages were ten guineas; and that there was a smart young fellow of a valet who sate in the dicky with her in travelling; that they were going to travel about for some time, and then, before winter, return to London, which was their home. Jane, she said, she had promised, should go at ten o'clock to talk with the lady; and, in conclusion, she warmly counselled her to take the place, for they were rich folks, there was no doubt of that, and there was nothing like seeing a little of the world when one was young.

Jane was captivated at once by the prospect: it would be a comfort, she thought, to be out of Nottingham, having parted in this way with the Mainwarings, for now she could not bear the thoughts of going to chapel; and was not Mark gone too? The good char-woman was right; it would do her good to see a little of the world. Mrs. Griffiths, on the other hand, demurred. Suppose Jane should be unhappy, or ill, such a long way from home as she would get; and, as to that fine valet, who was to go travelling about at her side, she did not like that at all; fine gentlemen servants, she said, were her horror. Rachel came in at that moment, and, hearing the proposal, declared that she herself would take it, if Jane did not; she would like it better than dress-making. Rachel was in serious earnest; she was a handsome girl, and would make a clever lady's-maid; but it never would do for her to go travelling about with a fine valet; and who would trust poor Rachel in London? This determined Jane at once; she promised her sister the whole half of her wages, and began, though not yet engaged, to make preparations for her new destination.

Jane was engaged before half-past ten the next

morning. Her new mistress was a certain Mrs. Tremaine, the lady of a Captain Tremaine. Jane had fancied her a stout old lady, quiet and dignified: how great was her surprise, therefore, to find her small and thin, with a sharp, somewhat jaded expression of countenance, and an almost restlessness of manner. She might be thirty, by appearance, or she might be forty; for her complexion was faded, and her hair, though of a beautiful dark brown, was the thinnest Jane had ever seen uncovered by a cap. It might be the natural course of time, or it might be sore sickness, which had aged the lady. A keener observer, however, than Jane's experience at that time allowed her to be, would have suggested rather, that it was an unhappy life, trouble and anxiety of one kind or other, which had dealt with her even more severely than time.

Mrs. Tremaine was a more experienced reader of countenances than Jane: she determined, the first moment she saw her, to engage her; she was sure she was honest, clever, cleanly, and steady; she was, in short, prepossessed wonderfully in her favour. She put a few hasty questions as to Jane's qualifications, which seemed all answered to her satisfaction. "I suffer much," said the lady, "from shattered nerves; my health is not good. We travel about a great deal —sometimes we are in Bath, sometimes in Cheltenham. Captain Tremaine lives in society—it is the breath of his life; for myself, I want rest; you will not have a hard place with me. The next winter we shall spend in London."

It was all settled, therefore. At eight o'clock that night Jane was to go with her boxes, and enter upon her new service; and the next morning they all went forward towards York.

It was a very busy day—so much to get ready, all n a hurry, and so much leave-taking besides. There

was her father, poor man, who, drunken as he had become, and out of the elbows as he always was, loved his daughter Jane, and was proud of her; there was the stepmother to take leave of, who now, at parting, was singularly gracious; and there was Rachel and Letty, and poor little Sally too; and with all of these she had to cry a good deal, and to promise never to forget them, and to write to them sometimes. She went also to visit once more her mother's and little Stephen's grave; and there, upon the resting-place of those she had loved best in this world, she put up a prayer that the Almighty would bless and preserve her in the new mode of life that was just opening before her. Jane wondered how it was that she left the churchyard so low-spirited; not so much comforted as doubtful of the future. From the churchyard she went to drink her last cup of tea with good Mrs. Griffiths, whom, unfortunately, she found as low-spirited as herself; and then, in the evening, accompanied by her and her two sisters as far as the door of the hotel, and followed by her bundle, two papered trunks, and bonnet-box, entered upon her new service.

In the annals of society it never yet was known, perhaps, that a maid-servant went to her place at any other time of day than evening. There are many reasons why it should be so. In the first place, there is then no important meal to prepare, no mopping and slopping about in the new house at that time of day; no children to undress and put to bed—for they always take care that it shall be after the children's bed-time. Again, by going in the evening, they can drink a comfortable cup of tea with parents, or married sisters, old grandmothers, or kind motherly friends, like good Mrs. Griffiths. In the dusky hour, too, all their little possessions do not get so curiously scanned and commented upon—that is, if their possessions be few; for,

if they be many, the big boxes come next day, or the day after, brought in the open daylight. If few, on the contrary, and so small as to be conveyed in one little trunk or bandbox, it only looks quite natural—they have only brought with them just two or three things that they wanted: their other luggage comes afterwards.

Jane, who had hitherto flattered herself that her two papered trunks and paper bandbox were so respectable, found, to her surprise, that in this her grand new service they were quite inadmissible. A black portmanteau, belonging to the carriage, was handed to her, and into this she was required to stow all her possessions. Fortunately, Mrs. Griffiths had gone with her into the house, and was willing to help in this unlooked-for dilemma. Anybody may conceive her consternation when they think of the contents of two good-sized trunks, and of a bandbox, containing the Sunday-bonnet and the made-up caps, being all thrust into one portmanteau! Jane went to make her essay as lady's-maid, leaving Mrs. Griffiths to arrange all this with the valet. After an hour's absence, in which she had given satisfaction to her new mistress, she returned to her friend, and had the satisfaction also to find that the contents of the trunks had really gone comfortably into the portmanteau; and that, furthermore, a small travelling-case, containing at present only straps, a half-empty cigar-box, and one or two other trifles, was condescendingly permitted by the valet for the accommodation of the Sunday-bonnet and the made-up caps. Mrs. Griffiths thought the arrangement much better; for the bandbox, she said, was not strong, nor fit for long travel; there was a lock and key to this, and it was all sound and good as an iron chest. Jane therefore said, she would lend Rachel and Letty, each one of her papered trunks, and give

the bandbox to Mrs. Griffiths. Mrs. Griffiths declared it was the most useful present she could have made her. And so, shedding tears on both sides, and parting as affectionately as mother and daughter, Jane saw her kind friend depart, and hastened to her own room, to get, if possible, a few hours' sleep, after a day of so much hurry and trouble.

The travelling-carriage, with its four horses and vast quantity of luggage, stood at the door of the White Lion Hotel, at half-past seven the next morning; and poor Ford, with his hands folded and his hat slouched over his eyes, stood leaning against the corner of the coach-office, among a crowd of idle people, who had stopped on their way, or been drawn together, in the first place, to see two coaches, and then this travelling-carriage, drive off. Ford thought nothing either of the people, nor about his shabby appearance: he wanted only to see his daughter once more, though he did not care to be seen by her. Poor man! he had thought more of his first wife within the few hours which had passed since he parted with Jane, than he had done for months before. Ford was by no means a bad man; he was only weak, and miserably unfortunate.

The tall, haughty, and mustachoed Captain Tremaine came out of the inn, looked carelessly at the carriage, said a few words to the valet, and then got in, leaving his lady, who followed, to be cared for by the servants and the landlord. Ford scrutinized attentively both the master and the valet. Of late years he had drunk too much to have left his judgment very clear; but he disliked the appearance of both. He wished it were in his power to prevent his daughter going into this new service. And now she too came to the carriage-side in her dark gown, plaid shawl, and neat straw-bonnet. Oh, how like his first dear wife she looked—just as she was in the happy days of their

courtship! It was a time he had almost forgotten; and, for a few seconds, he was lost in a far-off day-dream. But now Jane was on the box, and the contemptuous-looking valet had taken his seat beside her. They drove off; she had not seen him—perhaps in this world they should never see one another again! The people moved away from the inn-door; and poor Ford went sauntering down the market-place, with heavy steps, but with a heart a hundred times heavier.

Jane, when she set off, was quite as much out of spirits as her father, and she dreaded having to talk to her companion. She might, however, have spared all anxieties on that head; for, pretty as she was, he seemed disposed to have no intercourse with her. She thought perhaps he was proud, perhaps he was sulky; perhaps he was one of those people who sulk for days. She would have thought, perhaps, he belonged to some order of La Trappe, if she had ever heard of such an order: as it was, she only thought he was the most disagreeable man she ever saw, and took a great dislike to him.

From York they travelled to the lakes of Westmoreland and Cumberland, on to Liverpool and Manchester, and then, by way of Sheffield and Birmingham, Cheltenham and Lemington, to London. All this journey occupied many weeks. In mere towns of trade they only stayed a day or two; in those of pleasure and great resort, they remained longer; but, as regards the journey and the Tremaines themselves, we will give extracts from a letter of Jane's, written in Cheltenham, to her brother John, in Bristol, where, unfortunately, it never was received, being sent to the dead-letter office in London, some months afterwards, with the words "Not to be found," inscribed upon it.

"Who, or exactly what are the family I am now living with," said Jane's letter, "I do not know. They seem, however, to have plenty of

money, and that is something; and, as I cannot say but I am comfortable enough, there is no need to be uneasy. We travel about from place to place, and live, when we stop in a town, in the best of hotels. Wherever there are races or musical festivals we go: my lady is fond of music, and Captain Tremaine of races. Some people say Captain Tremaine is a gambler, but I'm sure I don't know. Mr. Norris, the valet, is out of livery, and looks very much like a gentleman, only I often think he does not behave like one: I should not dislike my place at all if it were not for him. At first he behaved very distant to me, and then he got very civil, and then more than civil; and upon that we quarrelled, for I am sure he is not such a one as has respect for women because they are virtuous. I am very glad poor Rachel did not get into this place. I don't find it difficult at all to give Mrs. Tremaine satisfaction. I am sorry for her: she seems to be very unhappy: Captain Tremaine and she do not live pleasantly together. He often is angry that she goes to public places. I wonder why she does, because she always says she wants rest; and yet, when she stops at home a day or two, her spirits get so bad, and she sits and cries for hours and hours, till her eyes are almost blind; and then all of a sudden she will be dressed and go to a party, and looks so gay, that one could not think her the same person. She and her husband never come home together, and seldom go to the same places of amusement. When I came first, I thought she was five-and-thirty, at least—her hair so thin, and her face so haggard; but she is only seven-and-twenty! Oh, John, is it not shocking to think of trouble making people so old-looking?"

"*Sheffield.*—Only think, John, of our now being in Sheffield. I was so taken by surprise, I didn't know what to do, when Mr. Norris said the great black smoky town, which lay before us, was Sheffield! I saw hundreds of artisans going along the streets as we drove in; but I did not see Mark Griffiths among them: I wonder what I should have said if I had! I have asked the waiter at the inn, and the chamber-maid, if they know such a young man; but they don't. I would give anything to see him, for I haven't heard a word from Nottingham since I left; and now it seems so strange to be in the same town with Mark, and yet not be able to see him. I have asked leave to walk out a little this evening, and perhaps I may meet him. I am just going now, and will tell you if I do.

"Well, I have been out, but I met no Mark Griffiths; but I am so angry I don't know what to do. I met Mr. Norris in the street, and he insisted on going with me; he said it was not proper for a pretty young woman like me—he is always a flattering one in this way—to be wandering about the streets of a large town at night by myself, and that he would go and take care of me 'Mind your own business, Mr. Norris,' said I, 'and I'll mind mine!' and I walked away from him; but he would go with me, and wanted me to walk arm-in-arm with him, which I would not, because, if I had met Mark, I thought it would look so. After we had walked about for above an hour, Mr. Norris said we would go and eat a patty, and have a glass of wine. It was no manner of use of my refusing; so I went with him to what seemed a confectioner's shop, or more like a sort of coffeehouse, where

folks can sit all by themselves, and have what they like and nobody see them; and he called for coffee, and patties, and liquors, and poured me out some; and was so civil, nothing could equal it; and began all his long palavering about love and nonsense; and kept drinking wine till I was quite frightened, and wanted me to drink too. 'It's no manner of use, Mr. Norris,' says I, 'your talking to me of love; I've no love to throw away upon you; and I don't thank you for bringing me here; and if you don't choose to behave like a gentleman, and come away at once while you've a bit of sense left, why, I'll go away by myself, that I will!' I was so frightened I can't tell you, for an old woman waited on us, that looked like a hag; and she and Mr. Norris kept winking at one another, as if they knew what one another meant. I got up and wanted to go, but the old woman took hold of me, and said it was too early yet; that the gentleman was not ready. This frightened me more than anything else, and I felt as if I must escape then or never; so I jumped up, spite of the old woman, and run out, right through the house and shop into the street, and was walking away as fast as ever I could, when Mr. Norris came up. He looked all in a flurry like, and angry, but he was very civil, and said he meant nothing but good to me; that he was sorry if I was frightened; but that his love for me was so great, he did not know what he did. I never spoke one word to him all the way back to our hotel: but I determined to tell missis when I got there. I never met Mark, as you may believe; perhaps, after all, he is not here; I should hate Sheffield if I thought so, after the way this bad man has behaved; and, some way or other, I felt quite out of spirits.

"When I got to the hotel I found Mrs. Tremaine crying violently. She and the Captain had had a terrible quarrel—what about I don't know. I put her to bed; and, as she seemed more comfortable in her mind, I told her how Mr. Norris had behaved, and said I would tell Captain Tremaine, for that I could not bear it. 'It's no use saying a word about it to Captain Tremaine,' said missis; 'he and Norris are hand and glove; he'd never believe a word you say: and, let me warn you not to make an enemy of Norris, or you may repent it: and another thing—I have troubles enough of my own to bear, without having yours also. I can do nothing for you; so let me hear no complaints.' I am very much vexed and hurt at this; for, to whom can a poor servant speak, among strangers, as I am, if not to her missis? So I have given warning to leave, let me be where I may, when the month is up. Missis upon this went into hysterics, and it was long past midnight before she was well enough to be left. I am now writing to you instead of going to bed; for it's no manner of use trying to sleep, especially as we set off again early in the morning. I have no chance now of seeing Mark Griffiths; and yet, perhaps he is living in this same street—perhaps at the very next house. Good bye, John; the Boots has knocked at my door; in two hours we shall be off. I shall add more to my letter in Cheltenham, where we stop some time."

"*Cheltenham.*—Here we have now been six weeks, and I have not added a word to my letter. I gave warning, as I told you, in Sheffield;

ard, according to that warning, I ought not to have been still where I am. Missis, however, a day or two afterwards, said I must think better of what I had done. She said she could not part with me; she was very kind, and cried, and said she had many causes of unhappiness: that, though she was married, she had no friend in her husband; that I was kinder to her than anybody else; and, if I would only stop, she would raise my wages to twelve pounds. I have lived with them now a quarter of a year; and she gave me a pound towards my quarter's wages, which I was greatly in want of. She gave me also a handsome shawl, and two dresses, which, though I can never wear myself, because they are evening dresses, and a deal too little for me, I can sell, she says, either here or when we get to London. She must have spoken to Mr. Norris also about his behaviour to me; for he has ever since been as distant and haughty as can be: which, though not pleasant in a fellow-servant, I like a deal better than all his civility. This is a very gay place, although the season is nearly over. We have had a footman since we lived here: he is a very nice young man, by name James Kemp; he once lived in Bristol, with a gentleman named Dixon; and it's quite a pleasure to me to talk to him about the town in which you, my dear John, are living. I have learnt from him all about the churches, and where the —— office is: I almost fancy I have been in Bristol: I only wish I knew in which street you live, that he might tell all about it.

"I have very little to do with Mr. Norris now: he gambles, that's certain, let Captain Tremaine do what he will. Mrs. Tremaine lives very gaily here, and has had a many new and expensive dresses: she and the Captain seem much happier now. The weather is fine, the town and neighbourhood very charming, the people all gay; and, if I could only know something about those who are dear to me, I should be very happy."

"*Two weeks later.*—Something very dreadful has happened since I wrote the above. Captain Tremaine and a Colonel Broadwood, a well-known gambler, have fought a duel. Captain Tremaine is slightly wounded; but, what is worse, hand-bills have been posted about, charging him with something very bad—something dishonourable about their gambling. The hand-bills were posted up in the night; and, as soon as he heard of it, Captain Tremaine had them torn down. James says, if he were to go out he would get horse-whipped, for that he is covered with disgrace. I don't understand what it is—I only know what James says; and this is certain, that it has made a great commotion in the house. James leaves to-morrow; Mrs. Tremaine is suddenly taken ill with a nervous attack; trades-people of all sorts are clamouring for their money; all our things are got ready for a hasty departure; and to-morrow, ill as both Captain and Mrs. Tremaine are, we set off for London.

"James will see this letter safely in the post; and so no more at present from your loving sister,

"JANE FORD."

CHAPTER VI.

DISCOMFORT AND TROUBLE IN MANY WAYS.

JANE, from hearing Mrs. Tremaine talk of their "town house," and their "residence in London," had pictured to herself something very magnificent. It was a little disappointment to her, therefore, to find the house small, and deplorably out of order. Four rooms were expensively furnished; yet even these had a second-hand tarnished appearance, especially by daylight: the rest of the house was supplied with the barest necessaries, all of the cheapest description, and many of them broken and unsaleable. Scarcely a window in the back-rooms was without broken glass, or would shut tightly: all wanted painting; all looked dirty and neglected. Mrs. Tremaine said, all this was the work of a family, "a highly respectable family, to whom they let the house furnished during their summer's absence." Jane thought to herself, it was odd the place should get so out of order in one summer; but she did not doubt Mrs. Tremaine would have all made comfortable before long, especially as winter was coming on.

"I must advertise for a cook, and housemaid, and footman," said Mrs. Tremaine to Jane, one day; "in the meantime, you must manage as well as you can: the Captain will dine at his club; Norris will leave; you can cook a little dinner for me; we will get all in order presently, and when we get our full establishment, you will find your place a very easy one."

Jane put the house in order as well as she could; waited on Mrs. Tremaine in the morning; cooked a little dinner for her in the afternoon, and dressed her in the evening to go to the theatre, or some place of amusement. The Captain dined at his club; Norris went; and she found herself valet, lady's-maid, cook,

and housemaid, all in one. It was worse than living at the master shoemaker's, for the kitchen was so cold, with a broken window and two ill-fitting doors; and her bed-room was still colder, with a broken skylight, and only one blanket; and she had to sit up so late, all alone, with not a soul to speak to; and that November in London was so foggy and dispiriting; and it was so cheerless of a morning getting up after never being warm all night; and the kitchen smoked so, and was really so dingy and dirty, do what she would to make it clean, that it was almost enough to make a body hang themselves, said Jane; and she certainly should do something of the kind, if it were not for the hope of things mending.

"What's amiss with you, Ford?" asked Mrs. Tremaine, astonished one day at her handmaid's altered appearance, about a month after their residence in London. Jane replied, that she was not well; she had got such a bad cold, and coughed so at night. She must trouble her mistress, she said, to find her the additional blanket she had promised her, and to let her nave the window mended in her bed-room, for the snow now laid quite in a heap at the bed's foot. She was not well, indeed, she said; and, having made this confession, she could not help crying.

"You must not be low-spirited, Ford," said Mrs. Tremaine; "I have advertised for a footman; we shall be suited in a day or two, and then you must not sit up at nights; and as for a cook, you manage so nicely for me —just a mutton chop or so, which is all I want, and the kitchen dinners are nothing, you know—that I think through the winter we will manage as we are. I will give you an additional pound wages this half year," added the lady with a smile, meant to be gracious. Jane thought the opportunity a good one to speak on a subject which pressed heavily on her mind; therefore,

as modestly as she could, she said, "She must trouble her mistress for some money; she was sorry to be troublesome, but she had lived now with them six months, and had only received one pound; she wanted warm winter things; she was sure she had got cold with getting wet of her feet the other night, when she fetched a coach from the stand; her feet really were on the ground; and she wanted some flannel for petticoats, and some warm stockings; perhaps her mistress would be so very kind as to pay her the money that was due."

Mrs. Tremaine was annoyed, and looked so; yet she replied cheerfully, "Yes, surely, Jane should have the money, but she was afraid, not just then; Captain Tremaine had a deal to pay; she had promised Mrs. Marabot, the milliner, her bill, but that she certainly should have it before long; in the meantime, Jane might look among her shoes, if there was not a pair of walking shoes that would fit her." Poor Jane knew that her mistress's foot was much smaller than hers; so, what was the use of looking there? "Or," continued Mrs. Tremaine, "the shoemaker in the next street, Timmins, or whatever his name was, would make her a pair; she could pay him when she got her wages." Jane said he had already refused to make her a pair, unless he was sure of the money on delivery; and, really, she said she had not even a penny to buy thread to mend her clothes with; perhaps Mrs. Tremaine could advance her a pound or two.

"Don't be troublesome, Ford," said Mrs. Tremaine; "I'll pay you the whole presently."

Jane was disheartened: poverty will crush the spirit even of a strong man; and she sate down in the kitchen and cried. She had better, she thought, have remained with Mrs. Mainwaring for half the wages. Only think how punctual good Mrs. Mainwaring was with the five-and-twenty shillings wages every quarter day, even

before the clock had struck twelve! And then poor Rachel! how, with no money, and all her things going to rack and ruin, was she ever to send the money to Rachel which she had promised? Oh, it was enough to make her cry!

At that moment a woman came down the area steps with a bundle in her hand, and knocked at the kitchen door. She said she had brought the livery home, which her husband had been refreshing, and there was the little bill; perhaps Captain Tremaine would be so good as to settle it. Her husband, she said, had taken the liberty to add the former account, which had been left unpaid; and, as they had their rent to pay, her husband would be greatly obliged by the money.

The woman was middle-aged, neat and clean, with a most friendly countenance. Jane thought she could be no Londoner, but must come out of the country; and, heavily laden as her heart was, it warmed towards her.

"So this, then, is the new livery for our new footman," said Jane, as the woman opened the bundle, and placed the contents on the table.

"You may well call it *new* livery," said Mrs. Evans, the tailor's wife, flattered by the word *new;* "see what the revivifying fluid can do: this suit has been worn a whole year and a half—he's made it look as good as new, hasn't he?"

Jane held up the coat, and looked at the crest on the buttons. "There have been several about the place," said she; "I wonder whether one is really engaged. But, after all, how does one know that this suit will fit him?" added she, taking up the smartly-laced waistcoat.

"Oh, bless you!" said Mrs. Evans, "he must fit it. Gentlefolks advertise for a footman just the size of their livery; and what's the use of any one's applying if he's two or three inches too big or too little?"

"But suppose," argued Jane, "one man who did not fit the suit was a more desirable servant than one that did?"

"That matters nothing," said Mrs. Evans; "he must fit the livery, or he won't fit the place."

Mrs. Tremaine sent word down stairs that Mrs. Evans must leave the suit of livery and the bill; that Captain Tremaine was from home; that when he returned he should see it; that she need not trouble herself to come again about the money, for that would be sent before long. The good woman shook her head, and said it was the last work her husband would do for Captain Tremaine; that if they had asked once for the bill, they had asked twenty times; that it was very hard upon poor tradesfolks to be thus kept out of their money; they had a large family, she said, coming up, and her husband was getting an old man, and goodness knew what hard work they had to make things meet and tie. She said it was now more than two years since they had seen the shine of Captain Tremaine's money; and they had made livery for him, and bought the trimmings, and paid for them themselves, and altered the livery again and refreshed it—say nothing of the work they had done for Mr. Norris, for which they had got nothing; nor had they even had the offer of so much as a suit of old clothes, by way of a set-off to the bill, though her husband had asked it so often; that the bill now was 3*l.* 16*s.* 0*d.*, and her husband would be quite out of his senses if she went home without it.

There was something about Mrs. Evans that took Jane's fancy greatly; she felt as if she could open her heart to her, and ask her to befriend her, if ever she wanted a friend; but then she remembered all the warnings she had had about the Londoners, and she resolved to trust no one. Mrs. Evans went, therefore, without Jane asking her even where she lived.

The footman, who fitted the livery, came: a smart black-haired, black-eyed, nimble youth of eighteen, whose knowingness in the London world frightened Jane almost out of her mind. He had a world of acquaintance, who were admitted by the area-steps, and closetted in his pantry of an evening. Oysters were eaten there, and purl and bottled stout, to say nothing of wine, drunk. Altogether there was quite a new life below stairs; things got worse and worse in a new way; the alteration was no improvement, and Jane again wished herself, hard as the place was, sole servant in it.

She needed not now to sit up for Captain and Mrs. Tremaine, but neither did she dare go to bed; she did her work over-night instead of in the morning, and then sate by the fire in Mrs. Tremaine's dressing-room, to keep watch over everything till they returned; and then, worn out, anxious, and far from well, went to her own room, not to sleep, but to freeze.

Weeks went on, and nothing was said about her wages; she made up her mind to leave, and inquired after a new place from the butcher and baker; and wished now that she knew where that friendly-faced Mrs. Evans lived, for to her she would have applied for advice and comfort, of which, poor girl, she stood so much in need.

One night she was sitting in her mistress's dressing-room half asleep, when she heard steps on the stairs. It was not her mistress returning, for these steps were stealthy as those of a night-robber. At once an icy thrill passed through her frame, as if her heart had suspended its motion, and the next moment it throbbed so loudly as if it beat upon her very brain. She started up, and, seizing the candle, rushed to the door. The footman, Louis, was there, and another man also, strong-built and ill-looking, with coarse fiery-red hair and whiskers;

they seemed as much astonished as she was, started back for one moment, and the next, one of them blew out her candle.

"Keep out of this room!" exclaimed Jane, appalled by this action, and remembering that her mistress's gold watch and chain lay on the dressing-table. The man said nothing, but, producing a dark lantern, attempted to push past her. "You may murder me, if you will," said Jane, standing firmly in the doorway, "but here you shall not enter!"

"Seize her!—tie her hands!—gag her!" said the stranger, in a fierce voice, and with a terrible oath. Louis put forth his hands to take hold of her, when Jane, remembering that discretion was the better part of valour, and that nothing of value lay about the room, excepting the watch and chain, stepped back, and, unseen by the men, for the room was dark, snatched it quickly from the table, and retreating as if for security, into a corner, where a small sofa stood, thrust it under the cushions. The two ruffians were in the room glancing furtively round by the twinkling light of the dark lantern; they spoke together in an undertone, and the next moment were at her side. She felt neither the agony nor the incapacity of fear, but as if she would defend her own life or her master's property to her last gasp. "In God's name!" exclaimed she, advancing rather than retreating, "keep your hands off me, and quit this room!"

The two looked at her a second or so, with a mixed expression of fear and hatred, and then, whispering something to each other, of which she could not catch a word, Louis burst into a laugh, and said, "Ha! ha! we only wanted to frighten you; we knew you were not gone to bed!"

"It was a wicked thing," said Jane, not, however, believing a word they said, but willing that the affair

should take such a turn, "to try to frighten me: I might have gone into fits, or have lost my senses."

Without another word, the two fellows stole softly out of the room; and, while Jane heard them descending the stairs, a dizziness came over her, and she found herself fainting. She was naturally, however, too hardy and too healthy to remain long in a fainting-fit; she recovered, and recalled instantly what had happened. All was silent in the house—the near church clock struck two—quarter after quarter went on, that seemed long and wearisome as hours; all still was silent, and then the same clock struck three; and then, the next moment, a loud ringing at the street-door announced that the Tremaines were returned, for, strange to say, that night they went out together. Jane's intention was to have told her mistress immediately what had happened; but a dark spot on the brow both of husband and wife told her then was not the time; and, at the command of her mistress, who was angry to find her up so late, she went to her own room.

The next morning Louis was all smiles and assiduity; she found the kitchen fire made, and the coffee ground, and he full of apologies for the trick they had put upon her. His brother, he said, happened to call on him that night; they had been reading in the newspaper the account of the great house robbery in the Regent's Park, and they wanted to see whether Jane would behave like the housemaid there, if housebreakers got in—that was all. He begged she would never say a word about it, and Jane might depend upon it they would never frighten her again.

Jane said that she had made up her mind to leave; that it was a shocking thing to be frightened; she should never feel safe in the house again; and that Louis might depend upon it she should tell her mistress of his having people in the house at night. Louis uttered half-intel-

ligible threats, looked savage, and talked of revenge if she did tell.

Mrs. Tremaine rang for her breakfast earlier this morning than usual. She said that in a week's time they would have a large evening party, and began to give orders respecting such alterations and preparations as were requisite. Jane begged permission to say a few words: in the first place, she gave warning to leave; and secondly, she told of Louis's doubtful connexions, and of the adventure of the last night, producing, while she spoke, the watch and chain from under the sofa-cushion, where she had concealed them. It was only right, she said, that Captain Tremaine should know the character of his servant; and again she must repeat her intention of leaving. Mrs. Tremaine looked annoyed and angry; said there was nothing but trouble with servants; and she must say she was vexed that this had happened before their party, for Louis waited so well, and was such a smart, useful boy. After this, of course he must go; Captain Tremaine must discharge him; "but," said she, "I would not for the world have him before the police, unless we could prove something against him, for one never knows how these wretches may revenge themselves. And, as to you leaving, Ford," continued she, "we must talk about that another time; I should be sorry to part with you. But you look ill, Ford. You asked me the other day for some syrup of squills out of my medicine chest; I am sorry I forgot them; take the keys and look yourself." Jane took the keys, but said she was afraid now the squills would do her no good; she felt altogether weak and poorly; she had a great pain in her chest, and her cough was dreadful at night; she wanted to get a doctor's advice, but she had no money to pay for any medicine; she must again beg to have her wages.

Mrs. Tremaine looked distressed. She said she was

sorry she had forgotten the wages; but Jane might take that plaid wrapping-cloak that hung in the closet of her dressing-room—it would keep her warm. She should really be paid before long, she might rely upon it. There was nothing in all this to satisfy; it was only the same thing which had been fruitlessly repeated so often. Jane urged, therefore, that her mistress would clearly understand her intention of leaving, and in the course of the next month suit herself accordingly.

"So kind as I have been, Ford," said her mistress, "I think it ungrateful of you to serve me in this way. You will think better of it; I am sure you will, Ford," said she, with a smile, meant to be insinuating, "or I have been sadly mistaken in you. Now fetch me my breakfast, and then get the syrup of squills."

There was no syrup of squills in that never replenished medicine-chest. Mrs. Tremain said, therefore, that the first time she went out she would bring her some; or, better than that, she should go out that very afternoon and get the advice of the physician in —— Street, who prescribed for the poor gratis.

In the afternoon, Louis came laughing down into the kitchen: he had got his discharge, he said; Captain Tremaine thought he might get a better service—would give him a good character, too, any day, and had paid him his wages, even a month in advance, and that he was going to leave. He had to thank Jane for this, he said, with a grin, which, whether it was one of aversion or triumph, it would have been difficult to decide. Considering how impossible it was for her to get a penny of her wages, nothing could be more galling than to see the worthless Louis exhibiting wages which he even had not won, much less deserved; she determined, therefore, to go to Captain Tremaine herself to demand hers.

The Captain, who was buttoning up his coat preparatory to going out, seemed astonished at her audacity;

said he had nothing to do with women servants' wages; took up his cane, and left the house.

There was no time for Jane to go to the physician in —— Street that day, nor the next; and, as Mrs. Tremaine stopped at home both days, no syrup of squills was bought for her, though her cough got worse and worse, and she felt more and more weak and disheartened, with symptoms of approaching illness. Mrs. Tremaine herself, in the meantime, seemed anxious and uneasy; and, though her husband did not return, as she seemed to expect each evening, she busied herself with planning how their great evening party was to be arranged. The upholsterer came for the rehanging of the drawing-room curtains; the dressmaker sent home a new velvet dress; yet, never did lady look more ill at ease, or more unassured. Something was evidently going wrong.

At this time Mrs. Evans made her appearance again; she was sent, she said, by her husband for the money, and was not to leave the house till it was paid.

"Oh, why, in Heaven's name, does she come bothering here about the money?" exclaimed Mrs. Tremaine, roused up from a revery by the message which Jane had to deliver. "I have not the money, and it's no use asking me for it!" added she, as Jane continued to stand by the sofa on which she lay.

"Am I to tell her so ma'am?" asked Jane, unwilling to do so.

"No—better not, perhaps," said Mrs. Tremaine; "but bless me, how you keep coughing; it makes me quite ill to hear you: and really you look ill, Ford," said Mrs. Tremaine, seeming astonished by the poor girl's appearance; "you are ill, I do believe. Ask this woman if she cannot come and stop here a day or two: I dare say she goes out; and then, Ford, we will try to get you well," said Mrs. Tremaine, in a tone of voice so

kind, that, ill and out of spirits as Jane was, filled her eyes with tears: "Tell Mrs. Evans," continued she "that as soon as Captain Tremaine returns they shall be paid; he will return most likely to-night. Roast me that partridge, Ford, and with white bread-sauce and a couple or so of roasted potatoes, quite hot; I shall need nothing more."

Mrs. Evans, from some cause or other, had taken a fancy to Jane; so, spite of being angry about the non-payment of the bill, she sate and talked with her in the kitchen all the time she was preparing her little dinner for her mistress. She advised her to get another place; said the Tremaines paid nobody, as Jane must know. Jane knew that well enough, for baker, butcher, grocer, all tradespeople whatever, demanded money, yet got none. Jane said she hadn't seen anybody paid but Louis; and she must confess, it hurt her to see him, bad as he was, paid more than his just due, and flattered into the bargain. Neither Captain nor Mrs. Tremaine had even thanked her for what she had done that night. Mrs. Evans said, most people would have given her a guinea, or a new gown, for what she had done.

How comfortably sympathetic Mrs. Evans was! Jane felt as if it did her good to complain, although her listener kept assuring her that certainly, with that dreadful deep-seated cough, she would go off in a consumption; and that, if she didn't get advice, the most likely thing in the world was that she would have a pleurisy, as the servant last winter had, for the house was colder than any barn, and Mrs. Tremaine had no conscience in sending out for coaches, let it be as wet as it would. Oh, it was pleasant to have somebody to talk with down in that comfortless kitchen, though that somebody might take even as gloomy views of things as Mrs. Evans did. And poor Jane mended the fire,

and swept up the hearth, as soon as the little dinner was cooked, in order to entice Mrs. Evans to prolong her stay.

In reply to Mrs. Tremaine's request, that Mrs. Evans would come and stay a day or two in the house, that Jane might be nursed, she replied, she never went out to work; but this she would do—she would run to the apothecary's, and get a blister for Jane's chest, which was what she wanted, and come the first thing the next morning to dress it; and if Mrs. Tremaine liked, she could recommend a good char-woman to her. Mrs. Tremaine said she would think about this. She hoped Jane was not so ill as to need a blister; but however, if Mrs. Evans would come and dress it in the morning, she might have one.

Mrs. Evans brought the blister, and then, finding the fire burning up cheerfully, and the hearth warm, she sate down again for a further gossip. She told Jane that they lived in Drury Lane; that her husband was twenty years older than herself; that they repaired and refitted gentlemen's suits; that her husband was the inventor of the famous "original improved revivifying fluid," which makes rusty black as good as new. She said they should have been rich people now, if they had not had the misfortune to neglect insuring a house and shop, their own property, in which they lived, and which was burnt down. Mrs. Evans cried at this part of her narrative, and then cheered herself up again, by telling what a good husband her's was—sober, industrious, and good-tempered, although he was getting old. They had lodgers, she said, who lived in their spare rooms, mostly players belonging to the theatre: and, besides their own five children, she had a grown-up son of her own, for she was a widow when Evans married her; a good son he was, and lived in gentlemen's service. Many were the interruptions which had

occurred during this narrative, from the ringing of Mrs. Tremaine's bell, and the sympathy of Mrs. Evans with Jane's shortness of breath and terrible coughing. "Well, if that poor thing is alive this time next year," said she to herself, as Jane took up a letter which the postman had brought, "she may thank a better constitution than most folks': it's all the sound of a churchyard cough—that it has!"

The next moment Jane came to the head of the kitchen stairs, and summoned Mrs. Evans to her help. Her mistress, she said, had sunk senseless on the floor, after reading the letter. She had helped her to the sofa; she had been in another dead fit since—would Mrs. Evans only just come up stairs, and see what could be done?

"Let me go to bed, Ford," said the unfortunate lady, holding the letter which had occasioned all her agitation, tightly crumbled in her hand; "I am very ill: let me go to bed."

Mrs. Evans offered a bottle of smelling-salts from her pocket, and proposed to run for a physician; both of which Mrs. Tremaine declined, desiring her, rather unceremoniously, to leave her alone with her maid.

"Ford," said she, after a while, and after, by the light of the lamp which stood by her bedside, she had re-read the letter two or three times, "I may as well tell you the truth; I can trust in you, Ford, though I could trust in no living creature beside."

Jane, touched by her mistress's words, and perhaps a little flattered by the confidence about to be reposed in her, leant forward over the bed; and her mistress, hastily thrusting her thin hair under her handsome night-cap, and pouring eau-de-cologne into the palms of her hands, began. "Captain Tremaine has left England!—Oh, my God! left me to face his creditors and ruin—me, a weak woman, without a single friend

in the world from whom I may ask either counsel or help!"

"Dear ma'am, are there none of those who come to the party?" meekly suggested Jane.

"Party!" repeated Mrs. Tremaine, with a scornful laugh; "no, no! I have not a single friend in this world; and here am I, left to face that misery and disgrace which Tremaine dare not face. Oh, the cruelty, the selfish cruelty of this, will drive me mad!"

Jane knew not what to say; she chafed the temples of the poor lady, who had now sunk, apparently insensible, on the pillow; she wiped the perspiration from her forehead, and gave her wine and water to drink: but what could she say? She saw, too clearly, that she too, a stranger in London, was a beggar. Dismay, distress of mind, apprehension for the future, crushed her down to the earth. She said not a word, however, of her own troubles, but sought only for something of consolation to say to her mistress.

"Oh, good God!" exclaimed Mrs. Tremaine, as if thinking aloud, "better ten thousand times to earn the bread one eats by day-labour—to live on bread and water, than be devoured by fears of that day of reckoning which will come, and which now," added she, in a voice almost sepulchral, "has come! What have I known of pleasure, or peace of mind, for three years? and now to be left thus!—oh, my God! to be left thus!"

"If you please, ma'am, only just to listen," said Jane at length, "and don't think it impertinent." Mrs. Tremaine turned her eyes upon her, and seemed to wait her words.

"I have heard you speak," said Jane, "of an old gentleman in Glamorganshire—your father; cannot you, please, ma'am, go to him? will not he help you?" Jane would have spoken of the parable of the prodigal son, but she feared that might be too great a liberty.

"My father!" returned the lady; "yes, Tremaine tells me to go to my father; but I married against my father's will: I left a home, an earthly paradise, for a husband who neglected me! For ten years I have never seen my father: he would not, perhaps, receive me, if I went down on my knees at his door: he foretold this, that has now happened, ten years ago!—he never liked my husband; and, for anything I know, he may have ceased to love me also;" and poor Mrs. Tremaine, overcome by her feelings, buried her face in the pillow, and wept.

Jane stood speechless, wondering what was to be done; when, casting up her eyes, she saw Mrs. Evans on the other side of the bed, half concealed by the curtain. She had heard all.

"I am very sorry, ma'am," said she, before Mrs. Tremaine lifted her head from the pillow, "to press an unpleasant subject; but, seeing as how things have come to this pass, what am I to say to my husband about the money?"

"The money!" repeated Mrs. Tremaine, raising herself again in the bed, and in a tone of voice much calmer than Jane expected, "take back the livery, and any clothes of Captain Tremaine's that are left. Look in the wardrobe, Ford, in his dressing-room. I am sure there are plenty of clothes there to cover Evans's bill. And good Mrs. Evans," added she, in a beseeching tone of voice, "say nothing of what has happened. I have behaved handsomely to you, and I trust to your honour."

The tailor's wife, who was by no means implacable, said she was sorry for all this misfortune, and hoped it would after all turn out well. She was quite satisfied the bill should be so settled; she would take home the clothes in a cab, and say nothing to any one. And thus, greatly to her satisfaction, a cab conveyed her

and a quantity of scarcely half worn-out apparel—say nothing of the suit of livery—into Drury Lane.

Mrs. Tremaine forgot how ill Jane was, and that she had a blister that ought to have been put on that night: she forgot, in short, everything but her own misfortunes, which, overwhelming as they were, were by no means unexpected; for both she and her husband had known for years that, as sure as night succeeds to day, a terrible crisis in their affairs would come; and now it was come. Captain Tremaine would be declared bankrupt; his furniture given up to his creditors; he would seek his fortunes in a new land; and his wife, whom he had ceased to love, must take the advice he had given her—like a second prodigal, throw herself upon the tender mercies of her father; who, however, probably, unlike the father in the gospel, would neither receive her with open arms, nor make rejoicing on her account.

Mrs. Tremaine lay on her bed, overwhelmed by the dark and uncertain prospect before her, more ill in mind than body; while poor Jane, who sate till past midnight watching by her side, no less agitated and dispirited than she, was becoming the prey of cruel sickness, which there was then no time to ward off. She was without money, without friends, without a home! What was to become of her? Known only, too, as connected with miserable spendthrift bankrupts, whom every tradesman would curse—what indeed was to become of her? She thought of kind-hearted Mrs. Griffiths, of Mark, of her brother John, of the Mainwarings, even of her own unhappy family; and how gloomily, hopelessly wretched, seemed her prospects!

In the dead of the night, Mrs. Tremaine, who had been deciding on her own plans of action—not sleeping, as Jane had imagined—rose up in her bed, and said she must instantly get up and prepare for her

departure; that the next evening she would set off by the mail to her father's house; and that, in the mean time, she and Jane must busy themselves in preparations for their departure. Jane made up the fire in the bedroom, fetched down trunks and portmanteaus; and, at the command of her mistress, packed up all her clothes, plate, and such valuables as she could convey away. The dull cold light of a foggy February morning crept in through the windows as they were in the midst of this occupation. "And now," said Mrs. Tremaine, "you must go and take my place by the Bristol mail to-night."

Bristol! how it struck upon her heart! for her brother was there—a new hope cheered her at once: would not her mistress take her with her? In Bristol, at least, she had a friend—oh, might not she too go there? Her mistress peremptorily refused. Bristol was but one stage of her journey, she said, nor could she afford to take a servant with her. She wondered at Jane asking it; she could soon get another place in London—Mrs. Evans would get her one.

"But my wages!" said Jane, roused into energy rather by the manner than the words of her mistress: "am I to be left here without wages?"

"Don't begin on that subject now," said Mrs. Tremaine; "and don't speak so impertinently, Ford."

"I declare to you, ma'am," returned Jane, in a tone meant to be one of the deepest civility, "that I have not a farthing to bless myself with. I have suffered more in your service than I ever suffered in my life before. Eight months' wages are due; I feel that I am going to be ill; London is a wicked place; and what's to become of me? You brought me here, ma'am, and it is your bounden duty to see that I am not turned into the streets of London a beggar.

"How can you talk so, Ford?" exclaimed Mrs.

Tremaine; "so distressed as I am, how can you talk so?"

"The money that is honestly due to me," continued Jane, "I must have. I am sorry to make you angry, ma'am; but poor servants are flesh and blood, as well as their betters; and this, Mrs. Tremaine, is the solemn truth—I will not stir out of this house to do a single errand for you, without my wages, or security for them. Mrs. Evans," continued she, leaning against the door, for she felt excited almost to fainting, "had not a juster claim on you than I have! Night and day, day and night, have I served you! For Heaven's sake, ma'am, do not leave me a beggar in London!"

"Well, Ford," the lady replied, "I did not think you would have treated me in this way; and yet," added she, the moment afterwards, "I don't blame you. You have served me faithfully; and, though I cannot give you money, you shall have money's worth. Fetch me the new time-piece from the drawing-room."

Jane did so: it was of beautiful workmanship, and had been won in a raffle by Captain Tremaine some months before. "Its worth," said she, "is at least twenty pounds."

"Oh, ma'am, that's sadly too much," said Jane.

"No, no," returned her mistress, who found it easy to give away what she herself could not remove, "it will be taken at half its value by the creditors. I owe you more than your bare wages; take it now into your own room, and put it securely among your own things; and go then, and take my place by the Bristol mail for this evening

Jane said, which was true, that she felt very ill; she thought Mrs. Evans would most likely come in the course of the morning; and besides, that she did not know the way to the office. Mrs. Tremaine was, however, too impatient to secure her own early departure,

to risk even the delay of an hour. She gave Jane the money requisite for her own fare, and to pay for a cab for herself, from the nearest stand and Jane, much easier in her mind, now that she had her mistress's pledge in her hand, wrapped herself up as warmly as she could, and hastened to do her bidding.

By nine o'clock that night, Mrs. Tremaine, with all her trunks and portmanteaus, was on her way to Bristol. Mrs. Evans came to spend the night with Jane, who, too ill to keep up any longer, put on the too long-delayed blister, and went to bed in her late mistress's chamber.

By break of day, a loud ringing at the street-bell aroused them. Louis had spread the news, which he had gained, nobody knew how, of Mrs. Tremaine's departure; and now came the landlord, with proper officers, to secure the furniture; and next came creditors, claiming to know if what they had heard were really true;—all ending by curses loud and deep on the debtors, who had so recklessly escaped their hands.

It was no time then for invalids in the house. Mrs. Evans seemed like another Mrs. Griffiths; she hastily dressed the blister, and undertook to pacify the noisy people, whilst Jane went to look after her own few possessions, and above all things, to secure the pledge for her unpaid wages. Unfortunately, poor girl, she had now bitterly to deplore the want of those two respectable papered trunks, which had been left at Nottingham. Every trunk and portmanteau, large and small, had been taken by the Tremaines; nothing remained for her use but one broken deal box, and two worn-out bandboxes; and being, as we know, a servant girl who had prided herself on her respectability, we need not wonder now at her being ashamed of that array of invalid boxes and unsightly bundles, which at best have a thriftless, poverty-stricken look.

But it was no time now to stand pondering or deploring The time-piece was wrapped in a flannel petticoat, and made, of course, the most valuable contents of the old deal box; and each bundle was made up as compactly as possible in an apron or a shawl.

Jane paused for a moment at the drawing-room door, to hear what the people were talking so loudly about. "I'll take my Bible-oath of it," said Louis, to the man who was making an inventory of the goods, "that it stood here—a French time-piece, worth twenty or thirty guineas!"

"It was here yesterday," said Mrs. Evans, "for I saw it myself."

A sickness came over Jane, and she felt almost as frightened as if she had been guilty of stealing it. In her hurry and confusion she had forgotten to tell Mrs. Evans that the time-piece had been given to her.

"That's the maid-servant," said Louis, pointing to her; "you can ask her about it."

All eyes were turned at once upon her, and she, fearing to lose the only pledge she had for payment, turned pale, which many attributed to guilt. "Yes, gentlemen," she said, rousing herself, however, "the time-piece was there yesterday, but Mrs. Tremaine gave it to me instead of my wages"

"A likely thing!" "Fetch it down!" "Give it up instantly!" "We'll have her boxes searched!" together with a malicious laugh from Louis, rung at once upon her ear, and the assembly of suspicious, angry men gathered about her; while Mrs. Evans, half in trouble and half in suspicion, looked on, and said nothing.

"Gentlemen," said Jane, in a tone of conscious innocence, "I have taken nothing but what was given me as my due. I have lived in this family for eight months, and have received but one pound of my wages. I am a stranger in London; I must pay for whatever I have,

till I get another service; I have not a farthing of money in the world. Mrs. Tremaine knew this; she said she could give me no money, but that I should have the time-piece. I am honest; indeed, gentlemen, I am!" said Jane, just ready to burst into tears.

"What witnesses have you?" asked somebody.

"Oh, good gracious! none!" said Jane, catching against a piece of furniture to prevent her falling, for she felt herself becoming deathly faint. "I never thought," added she, after a momentary pause, "but that all was right, or I would have asked missis to tell Mrs. Evans, there. But upon my soul, every word I say is true!"

"We must have the time-piece, however," said one voice. "We must have your boxes searched," said another. "It's but little we shall get at best," said a third, "and a thirty pound time-piece is too much for your share of eight months' wages." The landlord said, that rent and servants' wages must be first paid. The time-piece must be given up; it was a pity she ever had it; but that, notwithstanding, if she could bring witnesses, or a letter from Mrs. Tremaine, to say how much was due to her, he would stand her friend.

It was a comfortable thing to hear anybody talk of standing her friend; so, as the landlord said, the best way to pacify everybody, was to let her things be searched. Mrs. Evans followed her out to help her with them down stairs; saying to her, the moment they were out of hearing, "Why did you not appeal to me as a witness, child? I'd have stuck to you through thick and thin. Lord, what a set of brutes they are!"

Jane thought Mrs. Evans's morality was not the most precise in the world, but she could not at that moment quarrel with it. She wiped away her tears, felt very wretched, and, having carried down, with her friend's help, the bandboxes, bundles, and broken box into the drawing-room, without saying a word, but with a bitter

sensation of shame and humiliation that she was suspected even of dishonesty, opened her miserable possessions; and then, taking out the time-piece, stood aside, that all, if they pleased, might search farther. The feeling towards her was various, according to the natural dispositions of the different persons. Such as were capable of such an act themselves, believed her to have purloined the time-piece; those who were not, believed her to be honest, and pitied her from the bottom of their hearts.

"Why could not you say Mrs. Tremaine had taken the time-piece with her?" asked Mrs. Evans of Jane, as they two were driving that evening to her house in Drury Lane.

"How could I?" asked Jane, not a little astonished.

"Every bit as well as saying it was given to you, and then lose it after all. I call that playing a very bad game," said Mrs. Evans.

"Oh dear!" said Jane, "I hope you don't think I told a story about it, and took it without her leave. I do assure you every word I said is true: I should be miserable if I thought you believe me such a girl as that."

"Well, well, I will believe you," said Mrs. Evans; but whether she really did believe her or not, Jane could not tell. And this little conversation took away all the pleasure she had the moment before felt in thinking she had a friend in London, and almost all her gratitude too.

CHAPTER VII.

OUT OF PLACE—NOT THE CHAPTER, BUT THE MAID-SERVANT.

The illness, which had been so long coming on, came with redoubled force, not only from neglect and

cold, but from anxiety of mind also; and, on the third day after Jane Ford had so miserably left the Tremaines, she was laid on an hospital-bed, in a state of the utmost danger from inflammation of the chest.

Six weeks after this, one fine balmy afternoon, towards the end of April, she reclined, half-dressed, but still weak almost as a child, on a bed in the convalescent ward. There was nothing very cheering, we may be sure, in the poor servant girl's prospects. There she was in London, far from her own family, and out of place, sick and a stranger, poor and comparatively friendless, yet, even spite of all this, now, in the amending state of her health, and influenced also somewhat by the cheering prospect of spring sunshine through the windows, she could not resist hope budding forth in her heart, like the unfolding flowers of the season. Yes, she thought, things might—things certainly would mend; and, had she not received great kindness from the tailor's family in Drury Lane? and might she not, before long, have a letter from John, in answer to the one she wrote him just before she left the Tremaines? And Mrs. Griffiths, too, would not she certainly answer the letter Mrs. Evans had written to her, nearly a month ago, to tell her how badly things had gone with her in London? And, above all, was not she getting better? and was she not young? and might not she soon get another place? and then she could repay the fifteen shillings which Mrs. Evans had lent her. Oh, yes! yes! her heart answered; and, spite of an hospital ward, and spite of weakness and poverty, and the vast desert of London in which she was a stranger, the heart of the poor girl filled with gratitude towards God, and she breathed rather than uttered a prayer, that He would befriend her, and guide her still, as He had done hitherto.

The next morning Mrs. Evans, looking very cheer-

ful and confidential, was sitting by her side. She had a little straw reticule in her hand, in which was a clean pocket handkerchief, carefully enclosing two letters; but she did not tell Jane about these at first. She told her a deal of domestic chit-chat; about the journeyman burning himself with the goose, and Philip, the youngest child, having broken a whole half-dozen bottles of the "new original revivifying fluid," for which he had been well whipped; and then she mysteriously peeped into her reticule, and selected one of the two letters, which she laughingly held up to Jane's face. "Here it is, child," said she; "Nottingham post-mark and all!"

Jane opened it: it was from Mrs. Griffiths, and was as follows:—

"I haven't felt right dear Jane never since I received yours of the 20th and if i had n't have been so bad at the pen should Have answered before now. i have n't had my right sleep since Yours came, the strange hand writing put me out so, for says i she Must be bad indeed not to write, and it such a thing for young Women to get into such bad familys. there is law on your side however Jane and your missis must giv you a letter to say how much is your due. you must look after your rights which is no more than your bounden duty. i am glad, and thank the Lord on that account that you have found friends as all must be who know you as i do. i have had a letter from mark which makes mention of you. he is doing very well in Sheffield and wishes me to go there too, but at my age all removes are troubles. i look forward only to one remove and that will be to my last home. Mark as he promised sent the 50 shillings to rachel in hopes that you could do the same, which i am sorry to say she was undeserving of. she has not don right and that wil trouble you to here. and at this time when your health is week should be kept from you only if she is in London you may have a chanse of doing her good perhaps saving her from destruction, which may the Lord grant. Mima higgins set of to london with a officer soon after you was gone. she was a bad piece of goods and as the naybours said better lost than found and i had hopes when she was gone rachel would take to good wais. however when she got marks money instead of waiting to see if more would come, or trying to save some herself what doos she do but sitt of. where she is gon noboddy knows only that She left a letter to her father to say she was gon for good and noboddy need trubble themselves about her as she had plenty of freinds who would not let her want. if she is in london you most likely may see her and can giv her good advise of which she stands in

need. your father goes on but poorly. step-mother nothing to boast of. old Greasely is dead and the old lady has offered to take letty to live with her: but letty can't part with sally so she still stops at home which is a pitty for her tho' i must say verry good of her, for without her sally who is weekly would have no freind in this world. my letter is a malankolly one and wil do you no good by way of news. nothing is heard of john. my love to you jane, and hoping you wil write again and lett me here good News of you i commend you to the keeping of the good shepperd and am your lovin true freind

"SARAH GRIFFITHS."

"P.S.—Little annie manewarring was Berried last sunday, having died of croop. one of the others has hadd hooping cof Mr. manewerring preached the funeral sermon on the souls of littel children which left not a Dry eye in the chappell. don't forgit to wright to your late Missis about your wagges, and the sooner the better."

"Well, I would not have brought you that letter, if I'd thought you'd have taken on in this way," said Mrs. Evans, as Jane, weak as her illness had left her, distressed by the contents of the letter, laid her face towards the pillow, and cried. Mrs. Evans was vexed that Jane told her not one word of what was in the letter, and yet kept crying so; she took, therefore, the second letter from her reticule, saying, "And I'm afraid this letter won't do you no good neither." Jane looked at it eagerly; it was her own letter to John, in Bristol, inscribed on the outside "Not to be found," and now returned to the writer.

"Letter-writing never does no good," said Mrs. Evans, "and so I've always said; and look now, you'd better never have written a line, than take on in this way; it will make your poor dear head as bad as ever. I'm no friend to so much letter-writing," continued she, "and so I told my son when he left me. 'Never write, Jemmy,' says I to him; 'let's see you when you come back; but letters do no sort of good.' He's been in France, Spain, and all sorts of services; and every now and then he comes walking in with his handsome merry face, and a good suit of clothes on his back; and is not that better than plaguing his friends with letters whenever he's out of place, or has got a bad master? He'll

oe coming some of these days, for I have not set eyes on him this eighteen months; but I never trouble myself about him; he'll turn up, that I know, some day or other. Jemmy was wild as a lad," continued Mrs. Evans; "I thought we should have had a world of trouble with him. I was just married to Evans when he was sixteen. Bless you! why, there wasn't a day that he was not getting into trouble of one sort or another! 'Jemmy,' at last says I to him, when I was provoked beyond bearing, 'get out of your step-father's house, for you have no right to bring disgrace on it, and never let me see your face again.' Well, he took me at my word, which was more than I meant, and for four years I never set eyes on him. I never told anybody what I suffered, though; when in comes, one day, a smart young fellow, of twenty, and says he, 'Is Mr. Evans at home, to measure me for a new suit of clothes?' Lord! would you believe it? that was my Jemmy! He had been in America and back, and got heaps of money! I never was so pleased in all my life; and since then he's been in France, and Heaven knows where, and is now as steady a man as any in England!"

Poor Jane! she listened to what her friend related, and took hope from it; for, after all, her own sister might turn out well too. She had only, perhaps, taken her fate into her own hands for her good, as Mrs. Evans's son had done. Rachel was not bad at heart; and, was not her home enough to drive her away from it? and, besides this, Mrs. Griffiths had always been prejudiced against her. Yes, there was room for hope, and hope she would, spite of all things. But then, John! where was he? But there was no need to be anxious about John; he was a youth whose talents would raise him above any misfortune. She knew very little about Homer, and Milton, and Shakspeare; but, someway or other, she had made herself sure of John's being a

great and famous poet; so she dismissed fear about him. Still it was mortifying to have her letter returned, more especially as he now would not know that he was to write to her at Mrs. Evans's. Truly, she had had no pleasure nor comfort either from these letters, and she began to think, with the tailor's wife, it would be a good thing if there were no letters in the world.

A day or two after this the convalescent patients were informed that two Quaker ladies, who, like Mrs. Fry, went about doing good, and visiting the sons and daughters of affliction, would pay what they called a "religious visit" to the occupiers of the convalescent ward. Such of the patients as were too ill to sit up had their beds drawn near together; and others, propped in chairs, with pillows and cushions, sate, clean and neat, awaiting, at eleven o'clock, the intended visit. There were thirty patients; old wrinkled and haggard women, pale and thin from sickness, and poverty, and suffering, as well as from age; and young ones, with their pale cheeks and hollow eyes, telling tales of suffering too—suffering of mind as well as body. There sate they in that large clean ward, the spring sunshine streaming in at the windows, and among them our young friend Jane Ford. Beside Jane sate a little, old, wrinkled Welsh woman, who, even in her first stage of recovery, had lain in bed with her everlasting knitting in her hands; there sate she, propped up by a pillow, looking weakly about her, and knitting still.

Punctually at eleven o'clock the two Quaker ladies made their appearance, ushered in by the physician, and attended by the head nurse. The expression of their countenances was that of mild benevolence; their dress was the rigid costume of their people—gowns of a dark grave colour, and of a soft silken texture; the one wore a large white silk shawl; the other one, equally large and rich, of a dull drab colour; the elder wore the little,

close, black bonnet—the younger and stouter of the two carried hers in her well-gloved hand, having uncovered the well-proportioned head, of which the clear and closely fitting muslin cap showed the fair outline.

There was something so quietly dignified, so self-possessed, in the style and carriage of the two strangers, that gave them that air of awarded rather than assumed superiority, which is generally considered the prerogative of high birth; yet the poor inmates in the convalescent ward, if they felt awed one moment by their air of dignity, found their hearts warmed the next, by the expression of sympathetic benevolence which streamed, as it were, from the countenances of both, as if it had been the halo of a saint.

Jane Ford had seen the Quakers often; she had seen the closely buttoned-up and closely-shorn men in their shops; she had seen the women walking about the streets in their peculiar habiliments, and to her they were nothing more than a very odd people, who thought it a part of religion to dress unlike their neighbours. But, weak and ill as she now was, and friendless and poor, her heart warmed within her at the loveliness of Christian kindness, as it seemed to beam forth upon her from their two countenances; and she felt as if, like Mary Magdalene, she could almost have knelt down to kiss the hem of their garments.

The ladies took their seats, without three words being spoken; the old Welsh woman went on with her knitting, and all eyes were turned upon them. "Canst thou not, my friend," said the elder lady, "lay aside thy knitting for a short time, that thy mind may centre down into a state of quiet?" The poor old woman, feeling as if reproved, laid down her work on the nearest bed, and felt uncomfortable; for that very pause from an accustomed habit unhinged her mind. All sunk into profound silence; the patients wondered when the

ladies would speak; and instead, as they had said, of "their minds centreing down into quiet," this unwonted silence, this attempted, but vainly attempted, pause from thought, set every mind wandering. Some thought how odd it was; others examined the strangers' dress; others wondered when ever they would begin to speak; while the poor old Welsh woman, to whom knitting was second nature, felt as if she had become all hands, and could think of nothing but how uncomfortable it was to be without her knitting. At length the younger lady spoke. She addressed her hearers, poor and mean as they were, as "sisters and friends;" she spoke of affliction, and sickness, and poverty, as if she herself had passed through them all, and understood them by the deepest experience; she spoke of the afflicted as those the Heavenly Father loved; she told of the sick whom Christ healed; of the poor whom he dwelt among and loved; that he himself was poor; that his chosen friends were poor; and that, in the kingdom of heaven, the poor would be richer than the princes of the earth. Oh, what a privilege it seemed to be sick, and poor, and afflicted! There was not one of those poor hearers who did not feel as if she could bless God for these mercies, so much had the persuasive eloquence of the meek Quakeress affected them. All wept; and then she ceased to speak. Again a deep silence, interrupted only by low sobs, fell on the assembly.

The effect of the first speaker's words was passing away, and the greater part were beginning to wonder what would come next, when the elder lady began to speak. She addressed, she said, "individual states." She dealt in common-places more than her predecessor; but her mode of address had the deepest effect upon three or four of her hearers, to whom her supposed cases applied. She addressed those who had afflictions in their own families; who saw those near and dear to

them going wrong; who wished to go right, but whom circumstances, stronger than their own wills, led wrong. She spoke of those who were made poor through the unrighteous dealings of others; who had no home to which to flee—no counsellor with whom to advise; she said she was sent to preach glad tidings to such as these—to tell them that a way would be opened for them, as it were in the midst of the sea; that a friend and helper was at hand when he was least thought of; that a door was standing open to receive them, if they had but faith—faith as a grain of mustard-seed. There was something in all this that went to the very bottom of Jane's soul. "Lord, I believe! help thou my unbelief!" was the breathing of her heart. She thought the Quakeress was sent there on purpose to preach to her. An overpowering emotion of gratitude and hope came over her, and she wept plenteous tears.

After this, the first speaker knelt down in fervent prayer. A spirit of devotion, like the incense of the swinging censer, seemed to float above and around, and to lift every heart as if from earth to heaven. The lady rose from her knees; again all sank into silence: the spirit of that fervour began to abate, like the incense which has ascended and mixed itself with common air. The two Quakeresses shook hands, and made a move, not to depart, but to intimate that the hour of worship was at an end. The elder lady, whose address had made so deep an impression on Jane Ford, had not been so much absorbed by her mission as to be unobservant of its effect; and now, approaching her, she began to ask kindly of her illness and her circumstances. Jane did not tell her much, but the Quakeress was interested, and determined to be the fulfiller of her own prophecy of good. Money was given to the head-nurse to be distributed among the poorer patients; and then, bidding all a friendly farewell, one of the

most comfortable surely, if not the most elegant, private carriages in London bore them away: the poor Welsh woman, the moment their backs were turned, taking up her knitting, and "centreing down" then, for the first time, into what the Quakeress wished for, "a state of quiet;" the rest of the patients, greater part of them at least, losing the religious influence of the visit in the disappointment at not being so much noticed as Jane Ford, whom they set down as an artful girl, who knew very well what she was about when she shed so many tears.

The next day, the elder Quaker lady, who was named Forster, came alone on an express visit to Jane Ford. She sate down beside her, and made the poor girl relate to her as much of her family history as she chose to tell, and the whole of her London experience. "My husband," said the Quakeress, "will do what he can for thee in recovering thy wages. I am willing also to receive thee into my service. I am pleased by thy appearance, and disposed to believe what thou sayest. I can offer thee a situation as parlour-maid: our family is small, orderly, and quiet: the place will be one of propriety and security. If thou behavest well, thou mayest remain with us for years: our present servants have all lived with us long, one of them even a quarter of a century: a long servitude becomes with us a family alliance. As an inducement to this, on every fifth year we give an increase of wages. Art thou willing to take our service?"

"Willing!" exclaimed Jane, to whom Mrs. Forster seemed like an angel descended from heaven, "oh, ma'am, I am thankful. I never shall enough return your favours."

The Quakeress smiled faintly, and then began to inquire into the state of Jane's finances. As to money, the poor girl had nothing but the keepsake shilling

given her by Samuel Mainwaring; she was fifteen shillings in debt to Mrs. Evans; she had not a better gown now for Sundays; her working clothes were comparatively all worn out; she had not a pair of shoes to her feet that did not let in the water: she had indeed miserably gone down in the world since she left Mrs. Mainwaring's. She did not confess exactly how wretchedly off she was; but her hesitation, and the crimson that mounted to her brow, as Mrs. Forster questioned her of these things, explained to that considerate lady all that Jane forbore to tell.

"Ten pounds we shall give thee for the first year," said Mrs. Forster; "guineas the second. If thou remain with us over five years, as I said, thou wilt find thy advantage in it. I will advance thee one quarter's wages for thy present needs: if thou require more, speak freely: I am disposed to be thy friend."

Again Jane thought of angels coming down from heaven, and she had not words to express her gratitude.

Mrs. Evans came in the next day, with a happy countenance: Jane supposed she had heard of her good fortune, and was come to congratulate her; but no, Mrs. Evans had come with good luck of her own.

> "A riddle, a riddle, a riddle ma-ree,
> So now read a riddle, fair maiden, to me!"

said she: "Guess what old flame of yours has turned up within the last four-and-twenty hours!"

Jane thought of nobody but Mark Griffiths: her face became crimson, and her heart beat much quicker; but she would not have mentioned his name for anything: so she said, as calmly as she could, "Oh dear! how can I tell?"

"Oh, you sly thing!" said the tailor's wife; "how should you know, indeed! come, guess now!"

"Oh dear, Mrs. Evans," said Jane, "I can't guess; I know of no old flame."

"Young Jemmy loved me weel, and he asked me for his bride," half sung Mrs. Evans, in a low voice, laying particular emphasis on the name.

"Why! did I ever know your Jemmy?" asked Jane, in perfect simplicity, understanding at once that her friend meant her son.

"Now, that's a good one!" said Mrs. Evans. "Was it not odd, now, that Jemmy Kemp should live with you at Captain Tremaine's, at Cheltenham? I had always a liking to you, Jane," said she, "from the first moment I set eyes on you, but I little thought all the while, you puss, that you'd stolen Jemmy's heart."

"James! James Kemp!" exclaimed Jane, recalling, not without pleasure, the 'very nice young man' who was Mr. Tremaine's footman, in Cheltenham; "and so James is your son!"

"And isn't he a handsome young fellow?" asked Mrs. Evans; "as handsome a young fellow as ever trod in shoe-leather!"

Jane could not tell how it was, but she was more sorry than pleased, as Mrs. Evans went on to tell her how Jemmy, "for sure and certain, was very fond of her;" how he had told her so himself. "We were laughing," said Mrs. Evans, "about love and such like, and says Jemmy, 'No, I never lost my heart but once, and that was to a fellow-servant—a mighty pretty girl, who was a fellow-servant of mine at Cheltenham, when I lived with Captain Tremaine.' Lord! how I laughed! 'And I see this mighty pretty girl,' said I, 'every week;' and then I told him all the trouble you'd had; and wasn't he a bit sorry? I guess he was!"

Jane made Mrs. Evans at length listen to her new prospects, and how happy she knew she should be in the family of this good Quakeress. Mrs. Evans shook her

head, and said it might do for a while. Jane would get good wages there, and good living, and regular hours, and but little to do; she would soon look quite fat, and handsome, for Quakers' servants and Quakers' horses were proverbs in that way; but she didn't believe Jane would stop there very long. She said she was sure she should not, if she were a servant—it would be "so terrible quiet."

To Jane that seemed at present a recommendation. And then it was arranged how the fifty shillings should be laid out in improving her wardrobe, the good-natured woman persisting that the fifteen shillings due to her could be paid any time; nay, it was no great matter if it were never paid at all, so willing would she be to make a free gift to any one that Jemmy was fond of. "And now, in the meantime," said she, "you must get well as soon as you can, and come and spend two or three days with me, and we'll go to the play together, Jemmy and all, before you go to your new service."

In a fortnight's time Jane had left the hospital, and had so judiciously laid out the fifty shillings advanced to her by Mrs. Forster, as to have, to all appearance, a sufficient wardrobe—a very decent every-day dress, and a better gown for Sundays; and all, to her great comfort, were again contained in a respectable looking trunk, which, however, was only lent to her by Mrs. Evans.

James Kemp, or Jemmy, as his mother called him, had been unfortunately carried off by his master to Brighton, the day after his re-appearance at his step-father's; and now it was his mother's great fear that he would not come back again before that unlucky Tuesday which was to consign Jane to her new place. Jane, in her secret mind, however, hoped he would not, for—and let her not be blamed for this confession—since his mother had said so much about his liking her, Jane

had thought more about Mark Griffiths than she had ever thought about him in her life before. And did not she now wear a little black cord round her neck, which she was particularly careful Mrs. Evans should never see? and was not Mark Griffiths's grandmother's ring hung to that cord? A little sentimentality this; but not unnatural, even to a servant girl, who would hang a little amulet near her heart, to keep warm there the memory of a person she could love. It is true that Mark had not directly made any declaration of love; but Mrs. Evans had put the idea of a sweetheart into her head, and this was the consequence of it. She hoped, therefore, that he would not come; it was pleasant enough to think of him as the nice friendly fellow servant, "who had a bit of a liking for her;" but it was quite another thing if he were to declare love to her! What could she do? And wouldn't Mrs. Evans be mortally offended if she looked only the least in the world cold on him? To be sure she would; for Jemmy was the very apple of her eye, and not to love him would certainly be to offend her.

But it now was Tuesday morning, and Jemmy was not come; and now it was afternoon, and Mrs. Evans, who, nobody could exactly tell why, was in rather an ill temper, was washing up the dinner things, while Jane was quilling a border on a cap.

"I must tell you one thing," said Mrs. Evans, rearing up the plates she had just been washing, in the plate-rack, "and that's a bit of good advice to you: don't you go and run yourself into any mess you can't get well out of."

"How?" inquired Jane, not at all understanding her.

"Why, haven't you said," returned Mrs. Evans, "that your new master is to write to Mrs. Tremaine about your wages? That's all right; but I advise you to say nothing about the time-piece; remember, I don't want

you to make any confessions to me; I'm not so precise as some folks; I see nothing wrong in what you did; but if you'll be advised by me, put nothing into a Quaker's hands that you're not quite sure you can account for. Say nothing about the time-piece!"

"Well now, that is unkind," said Jane, laying down her work, and really wounded, not only by her friend's incredulity, but by her want of morality; "that is very unkind of you, Mrs. Evans! If you thought what I said about that time-piece," continued she, "was not true, you ought not to have taken so much notice of me; properly you couldn't have thought well of me. I should have been a liar and a thief, Mrs. Evans, if I'd done so; and if you thought me such, you ought to have turned your back on me. I must say," added she, "that I am very much hurt!"

"Well, well," said Mrs. Evans, "just as you please; "but there was nothing so very wrong if you had taken the time-piece. What else were you ever likely to get? I must say," continued Mrs. Evans, "I never did quite believe it!"

"I wonder whatever I've done, Mrs. Evans," said Jane, looking offended, and getting up from her chair, "to make you think so of me. I should have hated myself to have taken the time-piece, or anything else. I have always been brought up to be honest, Mrs. Evans, and I would have sold my clothes rather than have made a thief of myself; and I can't think why it should be at all odder that Mrs. Tremaine gave me the time-piece than that she gave you all those clothes!"

Mrs. Evans made no answer, for the door at that moment opened, and in walked James Kemp. Jane felt so displeased with the mother, that she could not be civil to the son, so she only said "Good day, Mr. James;" and, taking her work in her hand, went into her chamber, where she sate wishing herself out of the house, till Mrs. Evans summoned her to tea.

Mrs. Evans was again in the best humour in the world—laughed at what she called "Jane's black looks," and told her son what had put her so out of temper. James took her part as strenuously as possible, and, half in joke half in earnest, scolded his mother. James really was handsome; and there was something so friendly and open-hearted in his manner, and Mrs. Evans seemed so overflowing again with kindness and good temper, that Jane could not help the black cloud clearing away both from her heart and her brow.

After tea Mrs. Evans said she had to call on a friend, but she should be back long before Jane need go to the Tottenham omnibus; and, giving a wink to her son, she went out. Jane saw the wink, and it vexed her again, for this going out was only a scheme of hers, perhaps a plot between the two, that James and she should be left together. Suppose he should begin to talk of love!

"And now," said James, leaning his arm on the table, and looking her directly in the face, "I must tell you something: I should have followed you to Tottenham to tell you, if I had not found you here."

"Oh dear! it's coming now," thought Jane; "whatever am I to say?"

"I took a note this morning," said he, "for my master to a barrister, who was then employed in an Old Bailey case." Jane breathed freely at once. "He was on his legs," continued James, "as I entered the court, so I stood to wait till he had done, because I had to take back an answer; and what trial do you think was going on?"

Jane could not tell.

"Why, that fellow, Norris," said he, "that set-up conceited, impudent jackanapes of a Norris! He was tried for having robbed his master of a handsome dressing case, worth seventy guineas!"

"Why, sure!" exclaimed Jane.

"And the fellow," continued James, "had got counsel

to plead for him, as if he'd been the most honourable of gentlemen. My hands have itched," said James, "many a time to give that fellow a drubbing; and wasn't I pleased to see him standing there, like a dog with a burnt tail!" and James rubbed his hands in very ecstasy.

"Well, and what was done to him?" asked Jane.

"He was sentenced to transportation," returned he. "I couldn't leave the court till I heard that. I always hated the fellow from the first day I set eyes on him; not that he ever did anything to me, but I knew he'd behaved ill to you, and that was enough for me."

Well, it really was very civil and nice of James feeling that sort of regard for her, Jane thought; and when Mrs. Evans returned, only half an hour before it was time for her to get ready, she felt almost sorry. Mrs. Evans took half a bottle of wine out of a cupboard, and said they must all three drink a glass before parting, to wish Jane luck in her new place; and, when this was drunk, she said, as she felt rather tired, perhaps Jemmy would walk with her to the omnibus instead of her. Jane felt again that this was another scheme to keep them together a little longer; but she did not feel as vexed as she had done before, nor did she even refuse to take James's arm as they walked together to the omnibus.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CHAPTER OF STILL LIFE.

At ten o'clock precisely the family of Joshua Forster, as was their custom, were assembled in the dining-room to hear the evening chapters read—the Quaker mode of household worship. In that large, well-fur-

nished, well-carpeted, well-curtained, but singularly grave-looking room, were assembled seven persons.

At a small table, on which stood a remarkably handsome lamp, and a large open Bible, sate Joshua Forster himself. Apparently he must be sixty years of age, a large-built, healthy-complexioned man, with a low but broad bald forehead, and a quiet cast of countenance, as if at peace with all mankind, and, above all, at peace with himself; as if, also, the world and its tumults and passions had never come near him. Such indeed was the family countenance of the Forsters. Their lives, like those of their people, had been ever calm and untroubled; excited by no passions, influenced only by sentiments, and those of a domestic and amiable character, the world had always gone well with them, and, though they were not of it, had always smiled upon them. They sympathized with the oppressed, with the poor and the ignorant; they sympathized also with the weak and the wicked, not from experience in any of their peculiar trials and sufferings, but from a broad sentiment of universal benevolence. On the other side the table, in a large easy chair, sate Susanna Forster, the good Quakeress whom we saw before in the hospital ward. Their two daughters, their only children, somewhere of an age between twenty and thirty, sate together on a small sofa, demure and still, like two doves, side by side, in pale lead-coloured silk dresses, tight fitting to the bust, and unornamented, yet with ample flowing skirts, which fell gracefully about their small, beautiful feet. They wore clear plain muslin caps, if not as close fitting as their mother's were, as precise looking; clear muslin collars, cuffs, and aprons, they wore also, to match the cap, unembroidered and untrimmed, either by lace or ribbon. They looked like sisters of some Catholic order—but how shocked would they have been at the idea!—of which the principal vow

was to make purity of exterior a type of the purity within.

On a row of chairs on the other side of the room sate the domestics. Joseph, the combined gardener and groom, a man almost as grave-looking as his employers, having lived five-and-twenty years in their service. He had become grave and precise-looking, but by nature he was a merry man; he could fiddle and he could sing—at least he could do so five-and-twenty years ago. Perhaps he had forgotten these accomplishments in the interval: at all events, nobody had seen his fiddle now for many a year, and he only sung when he was nailing up the trees, or when he was quite sure the family was out of hearing. The other two domestics were an aunt and niece, the cook and housemaid, two fixtures likewise of many years' standing. The elder, as became her office, was fat and ruddy-complexioned, for there was very good living in the Friends' family; the other, Ellen, the housemaid, was past the bloom of life, and in fact nearly as old-looking as her aunt, pitted with the small-pox, and with a sour, austere expression of countenance, which might either be caused by natural disposition, or might be the unhappy result of the sad disease from which she had suffered so much.

These seven were all assembled in that goodly dining-room, and Joshua Forster was putting on his spectacles to read, when a ringing at the gate caused the family worship to be for a moment suspended.

"If it is the new servant?" asked Ellen, rising instantly.

"She can come in with thee," replied Mrs. Forster.

After a pause of three or four minutes, and the setting down of the boxes in the hall, Jane Ford, in her bonnet and shawl, modestly followed her new fellow-servant into the room, somewhat frightened as

the solemn family assembly turned their eyes upon her, as if for instant scrutiny.

"We read a chapter in the scriptures, young woman," said Joshua Forster, the moment she had dropped into the first vacant chair by the door; "it is our family custom."

She was taken by surprise; there was something so unlike what she had seen before, in this household meeting: yet it recalled the evening prayer at the Mainwarings; and thus, instead of attending to the chapter which Joshua Forster read, she recalled, as she had not done for months, that preacher's household—the exact father, the conscientious, duty-loving, and severe mother, the meek-spirited affectionate children—and her heart overflowed with love, tears streamed from her eyes, and good Mrs. Forster, who was quietly observant of everything, received this as a token that Jane's heart was "susceptible of good things."

Twelve months in that quiet orderly family, in which there was plenty of good living, and very little to ruffle her temper, so long as she fulfilled her clearly-defined and by no means difficult duties, found Jane wonderfully improved in personal appearance: healthy, alert, cheerful, and well-dressed as any maid-servant in the whole wide suburbs of London. Beyond this, she was a great favourite with all the Forster family, who found her, on her side, obliging and orderly, quick to learn, and unforgetting; conducting herself, in short, as if her duties were her delight. Mr. Forster had, as he promised, also used every means in his power to recover for her her unpaid wages from the creditors of the Tremaines; but, without a letter of evidence from the Tremaines themselves, every application was useless. Nor did any means which Mr. Forster used to ascertain the present residence of Mrs. Tremaine, or

who were her connexions, succeed. There seemed no prospect, therefore, but that her wages would be lost; and, even more than that, that her statement regarding the time-piece would remain unproved. But, however, as the Forsters never seemed to dispute her word, and her present prosperity had rendered her former loss less important, she ceased to trouble herself much about it.

Many were the crown-pieces Jane received from quiet Quaker visitors; nor would her mistress deduct the fifty shillings she had advanced at first, from her wages—they were made a free gift to her. A new gown, and a really good gown too, she received from her master as a new-year's gift—her two fellow-servants received the like—and half-a-dozen fine linen aprons from her mistress, materials for three caps, and a neat shawl, from the two young ladies, and an advance of ten shillings to her forthcoming year's wages. Was there not everything to make her happy and grateful? Yes, indeed! she was grateful and happy, and wrote the most cheerful letter in the world to Mrs. Griffiths, praying to have tidings of Rachel, as it was now so happily in her power to assist her, and praying also, that if her father wanted help she might know; but Mrs. Griffiths' answer did not come. Jane became a little anxious; but, nevertheless, that little anxiety did not make her unhappy. "Whenever they want money," said she to herself, "they shall have it: in the mean time, I'll hope things have mended with them." Jane had long before now, as we may be sure, repaid Mrs. Evans the fifteen shillings she had lent her; and had it now in contemplation to buy a good well-made trunk, although, in the well-furnished servants' rooms in the Quaker's house, she had much less occasion for a trunk than ever before in her life.

What, however, was the reason that the second

twelve months in this orderly comfortable family were much less pleasant than the first? One cause certainly was, that the favour the heads of the family showed to her was as gall and bitterness to the hearts of the cook and her niece. They had, they said, lived years and years in the family, yet never once had been petted as was this new comer. They were not going to quarrel with the family on this account; they knew too well when they were well off, to do that; but they were determined not to show her the same degree of favour in the kitchen as she received in the parlour; and, what made them even more bitter against her still was, as they said, that that old fellow, Joseph, was so taken with her. Was not he seen one day giving her a couple of peaches? and didn't he bring her rosebuds to stick in her apron-strings? What, they should like to know, had she to do with being decked out in that way? and, beyond this, he actually was caught fiddling to her when the family was out; he, that they were sure would not fiddle to them, let them beg and pray ever so much! But they would say nothing, determined these discreet women, although Louis, who had been her fellow-servant before she came there, and was Ellen's brother, had told them a good deal about her; they would say nothing—that they wouldn't, because they were sure she would be found out in time; and what was the use of pointing out the cloven foot to Mrs. Forster, if she had not sharpness enough to see it herself? They should like to know, they said, whether a man might have come about the place after either of them, and not a word be said, as that footman had come, no less than twice last week. Yes, yes, she'd be found out in time!

"Whose servant is that in drab livery, who walks backward and forward before our gate so often?" asked Joshua Forster, one day from Ellen, as she came in with bedside carpets, which she had been shaking.

"Some acquaintance of Jane's," replied Ellen, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Jane should not encourage young men coming after her," said Joshua Forster; "has he been often here?"

"Three or four times he was here last week," said Ellen; "but it is no business of mine, sir, so I never meddle in it."

"Yes, it is business of thine," returned Joshua Forster; "fellow-servants should watch over one another for good, in a spirit of love."

That evening the good man told his wife what he had learned from Ellen; and the next morning Mrs. Forster sent for Jane into her own room, telling her that the serious charge of a young man in drab livery coming after her, was made against her.

"He was, ma'am, a fellow-servant of mine," replied Jane, in her defence; "his mother is Mrs. Evans, that tailor's wife, in Drury Lane, who was so kind to me; he came last week to me with a message from his mother. I can't think, however," added she, "why he should be walking backwards and forwards in the lane so much, unless he goes on errands for his family."

"I have a great objection to followers after my servants," said Mrs. Forster; "I hope thou hast understood this; thou art too young to think of marriage—only two-and-twenty; by the time thou art thirty thou wilt have gained valuable experience, and have saved something for a comfortable marriage portion. Thy appearance, Jane, may gain thee admirers; but it behoves thee, on this account, to be doubly careful of thy conduct. This young man must be requested to keep away; if he have respect for thee, Jane, he will not wish thee to displease thy employers."

"Oh dear, ma'am," said Jane, "I don't know that he has any thoughts of that sort towards me; I'm sure I hope not."

James Kemp was seen walking before the Forster's gate the next evening, and again three evenings afterwards. Jane was really in trouble. What a foolish young man he was! She hoped with all her heart the family with whom he lived would make a pretty riot about his going out in this way! She began to be afraid, seriously, that her improved looks, and perhaps his mother's scheming, had made him now really and truly in love with her. She feared the aunt and niece in the kitchen beginning to suspect anything of this kind, for she knew what a cause of offence they would make it against her. She dared not go out to him to request him to come less frequently about the place; so she went to old Joseph in the garden, and begged him to give a hint, as out of his own head, to that young man in the drab livery, that the Quaker's family, who were mighty particular folks, would be taking the liberty, before long, of inquiring his business, if he was seen frequenting their premises so much.

Joseph, who was quite of a nature to take warm interest in a love affair, and thinking that Jane took, no doubt, a particular interest in the young fellow, nodded his head, smiled, quietly scraped his shoes on his spade, and walked leisurely to the door, which opened through the garden wall into the road. The young fellow in the drab livery was not far off, and received the message which old Joseph delivered, whatever it might be, as if it were the most welcome in the world. What the two talked about so long nobody knows; but talk a long time they certainly did. The drab livery, however, was not seen again that day, nor the next, nor the whole of either that week or the following; but from that day forth old Joseph was more patronizing and civil to Jane than ever.

There must be a restless demon within us, that will not let us be too long satisfied with our own good; or

what could it be that put it into Jane's head, about this time, to think that, spite of the good living, spite of the good wages, spite of the regular hours, spite of everything which made service in the Friends' family a good one, it was but dull living there: all so uniform; furniture, dress, mode of life, all so quiet, so unvaried and unvarying? She was dissatisfied with herself, because of her own dissatisfaction: she feared she was ungrateful; tried to be pleased; tried to make the two in the kitchen like her; tried to like them; but they were unfriendly in spirit, even more than in word and deed, and everybody knows what a discouraging thing it is to strive for the winning of good will from an unfriendly spirit. Jane reasoned with herself and against herself; she thought she was like the ungrateful children of Israel, in desiring some of the vanity, and perhaps even discomforts, of a less exact servitude, even as they longed for the onions and garlick of the Egyptian fleshpots.

The Quaker's house was one of a series of handsome villas standing detached, but still sufficiently near to command from the upper windows the respective courts and drives of each. The Forsters' neighbours were a most respectable family, but widely different from themselves—a Major Winton, who had two daughters likewise; but again, what a contrast was there between the Miss Forsters and the two Miss Wintons! These were singularly elegant and dashing girls, on whose account the house, and the whole neighbourhood, in fact, was kept in a perpetual gaiety. Riding on horseback, driving in carriages, going to operas, theatres, and balls, made the business of the Miss Wintons' life. Wherever they went was festivity and mirth; wherever they came was admiration and triumph.

Jane had made a little acquaintance with their maid; had had glimpses of their handsome dresses, and their splendid jewellery, and had listened till her head was

almost turned, with anecdotes and histories of the joyous life that all the family led. The Wintons were not such people as the Tremaines, who lived dashingly, and would end by paying nobody. Butcher, baker, and grocer were regularly paid every week, just as at the Quaker's. Nobody came and asked twice for their money. The servants had capital wages, and were paid quarterly; her friend the young ladies' maid, had twelve guineas a-year, and had now lived with them two years: she had no thoughts of leaving; said she should have unknown presents when they married, and maybe might then live with the one that married last. Jane's place, excellent as it was, sunk by comparison; the proverb says truly, that "comparisons are odious things."

The Wintons were going to give a ball. Jane was shown the young ladies' dresses, and the beautiful ball-room, with its splendid decorations; and, more than this, she was invited by her friend, the ladies' maid, to go in and see the dancing, which Mrs. Winton always allowed the servants to see, if she could get leave; and if not, could not she slip out unknown to anybody, just for an hour or so? To slip out unknown to anybody was what Jane could not think of; but so much did all this gaiety take possession of her fancy, that she never before did her work so carelessly, or with so little pleasure. She told Joseph how much she wished that Quakers were like other people, and had music every day, and dances now and then! Did not Joseph think it would be a deal pleasanter? She was quite tired, she said, of the hum-drum, prosy life she led; she wished Joseph would tell her, on his honest word, if even he did not think it very dull. Joseph confessed, what, he said, he had never confessed to anybody before, that it was years and years before his mind was quite sobered down to his place; it was different now, he said, for he was getting an oldish man, and quietness

and regularity suited him. He thought, he said, folks must be born Quakers, to fall into their quiet ways, natural, as one may say. He used, he said, when he first came, to caper many a bit to himself, and fiddle and sing when nobody was by; but, as he said before, by degrees he got used to it, and now he did not believe, if it had not been for Jane reminding him of it, he ever should have remembered how he had felt so long since; and yet, he said, he thought when she came to the place that it was ten to one if it suited her long. He should be mortal sorry, he said, if she thought of leaving, for he must confess he had taken a great liking to her; the house was quite another sort of place when she was in it; he hoped she didn't think of leaving. And then he began making a flower-border with all his might, as if he had his own private reasons for not letting Jane see his face any longer.

That same afternoon Joseph came up to Jane's pantry window, where she was preparing her tray for dinner; he looked north, south, east, and west, as if to see that nobody was either listening or observing him. The aspect of things seeming favourable, he leaned in at the open window, and said, somebody, that should be nameless, had just been at the garden-gate with him; his young ladies would all be at the Wintons that night with their mother; he should have to be there with the carriage, but he would come an hour beforehand; the coachman could bring up the carriage well enough without him, so that he was there to receive it; could not Jane contrive to see him that night? he would be there at eleven o'clock, punctually. "I say nothing, one way or another," said Joseph; "but I know well enough what I should do if I were you."

"Why, ought not you to be ashamed of yourself," said Jane, laughing, "for a good-for-nothing old fellow,

to bring your master's servant a message like that? And you know well enough, that if I were to go out at eleven o'clock, to meet Kemp or anybody else, they would turn me off without a character. You had better by half tell Kemp to give you no messages for me—and that I tell you plainly, Master Joseph."

Jane blushed, and pouted her lips, and did not look very much displeased for all that; but, as Mrs. Forster and her two daughters were seen at that moment walking up the garden, Joseph thought it as well to withdraw. The Forsters were talking of Jane as they walked in the garden. They said she certainly was in some respects altered from what she was, they could not exactly say how; and perhaps, after all, they should not have noticed anything, had it not been for hints which cook and Ellen dropped continually; they were afraid she was getting intimate with the Wintons' servants; and the Wintons, though in a worldly point of view respectable people, had not that care and oversight of their servants which was desirable.

Quite unconscious of what had been said about her, and not seriously annoyed, as it appeared, by the prospect of seeing James Kemp that night, Jane ventured in the evening to ask Miss Maria Forster for permission to go to the next house to see the dancing. Had Miss Maria been bitten by an asp, she could not have dropped the French cambric pocket-handkerchief, which she was hemming, with more apparent surprise and horror than she did on hearing this request from Jane. If there was one thing which this pious Quaker family held in greater abhorrence than another, it was dancing. Perhaps they never had seen a dance in their lives, but to their imaginations it was an abominable thing, a thing which no person with any decent feeling could with propriety witness, much less practise. The word was never spoken in their family, unless with abhor-

rence: dancing men and dancing women! what did not these terrific words imply?

The family mourned over Jane's request, as if in it they had indeed seen her first downward step towards perdition. They were sincere in their sorrow, for they were none of them hypocrites.

"Thou hast grieved us much, Jane, by thy request," said good Mrs. Forster; "I am sorry that thou valuest not the privileges thou enjoyest here: a guarded life, an absence from temptation, a removal from the pleasures and follies of the world. These, after which thou cravest, are unprofitable sights and sounds. Thou must, my young friend, strive to live nearer to the light within thee, which will lead thee aright, and preserve thee from evil. I cannot permit thee to associate with neighbour Winton's servants: they are light, airy, young people, who can do thee no good. We think well of thee, Jane," continued the excellent lady, in the kindest tone of Christian love; "we would not willingly see thee going wrong; but our own walking must depend upon ourselves; another cannot compass our salvation for us: thou must strive against a light and airy mind, always remembering that any wrong doing of thine will grieve us greatly."

Jane really was touched, more by the manner, however, than by the arguments she used. She could not help crying, and thinking that it really was very wrong of her, and very ungrateful too, not to be both contented and happy in such a family as this; and, full of these sentiments, she went into the kitchen, determining to sit down steadily to her work, and not to listen to the music, when it should peal through the open windows of the next house, nor even go up into her bed-room, as she had thought of, to watch the arrival of the carriages, and the alighting of their gay inmates.

CHAPTER IX.

EATING OF FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

If the Wintons had their balls and their dissipations, the Quaker family had also their little divertisements; the principal, perhaps, of which was the going of the whole family to what were called their Quarterly Meetings. The Forsters, being rich influential people in their own sect, had many friends and acquaintance; and on these occasions all met, "men and women Friends," as they would have said; which naturally enough gave a great pleasure to all—to the young certainly, more especially. There was the attending meetings in the morning, or perhaps for a whole day; and then, the next day, or perhaps for two or three days afterwards, the young people would make excursions into the neighbouring country, visit fine scenery or memorable halls or ruins, historical scenes, or scenes even of an interesting story; and, excepting that they wore the garb of a grave people, would on such occasions be not only extremely happy but really gay.

The Forsters were most regular attenders of Quarterly Meetings; and, as the daughters were known to be good fortunes, they were eagerly in demand to join all parties among the young. The happy time of the Quarterly Meeting was now at hand; and the family would be absent for a week. There was no occasion, in a Friend's house, to make this family absence a time of cleaning, because the house always was as clean as hands could make it. On these occasions, therefore, the servants were allowed a holiday also. Jane had nowhere particular to go; it was arranged, therefore, that the cook and her niece should have five days out of the seven, to spend with their own

kith and kin, while Jane and the old gardener kept house between them.

Jane had borne the refusal to see the dancing so well, that the family had even restored her to more than the accustomed favour. The cook and Ellen were not at all well pleased at the kind, friendly tone in which all the family said "Farewell, Jane," to her, as they drove off; the *word* had been the same to each of them, but they detected a difference in the tone.

Old Joseph rubbed his hands, and looked as funny as could be, when the cook and her niece were carried off the next day by the omnibus. He began singing, "Away dull care," as merry as a lark, and told Jane he had been furbishing up his old fiddle, to give her a tune at nights; and, if a nice young fellow would but drop in, might not they three be rare good company together! Jane was terrified almost out of her senses, lest the silly old man might have made some compact of the sort with James Kemp.

In the evening, Miss Winton's maid came in with her sewing, and they three, without "the nice young fellow," were as merry as need be. There had not been as much laughing in that kitchen for years as there was that night. Joseph fiddled and sung, and Jane sung, and so did Miss Winton's maid; and really it was eleven o'clock before they had an idea it was more than nine. Miss Winton's maid said, at parting, that if it were not for the cook and Ellen, she would often come in at night when her young ladies were out; and Joseph said, he wished with all his heart he was a young man, for their two sakes; and yet he was very glad he wasn't, for they were both such nice girls, it would be so hard to choose between them. Dear me! what a many silly things were said that night! which put them into such good humour with one another, and made them all think "what a pleasant thing a bit of company was!"

The next night Miss Winton's maid invited Jane to come in and see them, and invited old Joseph and his fiddle too; by which means the servants' hall at the Wintons was ten times merrier than the Forsters' kitchen had been the night before; nay, we must even confess, that they got up a dance among them, and found it such a right pleasant affair, that at twelve o'clock, at which hour the Wintons' carriage went to fetch home their family, Jane came back to their own quiet house, with one sigh, to think that the Quakers thought music and dancing so improper, and with another sigh, to think how displeased the family would be if they knew what had been going on in their absence.

The next morning at breakfast, old Joseph asked, quite in a natural sort of way, if Jane hadn't said that she wanted to go shopping? Yes, sure, Jane had said so; she did want to buy a good many things, but she had not made up her mind at all as to what day she would go. Upon this the old man proposed that she should go that day—yes, that very day. What was the use, he said, of putting it off? And, more than this, as she was going she might as well spend the whole day abroad—might stay till the last omnibus went, and so make it worth while. She often talked about Mrs. Evans, in Drury Lane; now, Mrs. Evans, he was sure, would like to go shopping with her, and would be so glad to have her there for the whole day. She must go—she must and should go—the old man said, and so she need make no opposition!

What did Joseph know about Mrs. Evans being so glad to have Jane with her, and to go shopping with her? Yes, what indeed! Jane thought it was rather odd the old fellow should be so zealous about Mrs. Evans; and yet, short-sighted girl! it never came into her head that Jemmy might have been suggesting this to the old gardener; so she listened to what he said,

and, by degrees, found a willing spirit growing up within her to go—to go even that very day. Joseph impressed upon her again and again, that she need not hurry in coming back at night, and that he would be at the end of the lane to meet her by the last omnibus; and now she must go and enjoy herself to her heart's content.

It was very kind of the old fellow! thought Jane, as she dressed herself. "It was very kind indeed!" repeated she, with a still warmer emphasis, as she walked to the lane-end to take the ten o'clock morning omnibus; and she would bring a neckerchief, or some little thing or other, back with her for him—that she would!

Someway or other, Mrs. Evans did not seem at all surprised to see her. She said she had been thinking about her all the morning; and how lucky it was that there was a cold veal pie in the house, for thus they could get a mouthful to eat, and go out shopping, as nice as could be, without her having to stop at home to cook for her husband and the boys. It was lucky she had come that day of all others, said Mrs. Evans, resuming the subject as they were on their way to a famous bargain shop, very lucky, for she should not wonder if Jemmy came in in the evening, for, his new employer being a bachelor, and in parliament, he had famous holidays when his master was so late in the House.

Whether Mrs. Evans had particular reasons for expecting her son that night or not we need not say; but, however, this was certain, that when the two returned from their shopping it was four o'clock, and James Kemp was standing re-adjusting his shirt-collar by the kitchen looking-glass. James never in his whole life was in higher spirits; he looked particularly well that day; the new dark-green livery certainly became him

better than the drab, and Jane felt not only quite disposed to be in good humour with him, but with all the world. While they were sitting at tea, Mrs. Evans suggested that they might just as well go to the play that night—it would be such a nice amusement for Jane; whereupon James replied, "To be sure!" immediately producing three tickets from his pocket.

"Well now! who could have thought of that?" exclaimed his mother, treading upon his toe at the same moment, which was intended to express to him her wish that Jane should have no idea of all this being a regularly plotted and planned scheme; and Jane, who neither saw the intimation under the table, nor of course could know the working of Mrs. Evans's mind, thought that really it was kind of both mother and son to devise so much pleasure for her; and, if it were only out of common gratitude, she must be greatly pleased; and again she thought how lucky it was that old Joseph had pressed her to stay till the last omnibus.

Our readers may perhaps say that Jane ought not to have gone to the theatre on any terms, knowing, as she did, the objection her master and his family had to places of public amusement or dissipation of any kind. Perhaps, strictly speaking, she ought not to have done so; but Jane was young, and pleasure and novelty how attractive and fascinating are they, to the young especially! Jane thought of Mrs. Forster, nevertheless; thought that if she were to see her as she was about entering the theatre, she certainly should faint. But there was no fear of that: so she gave way to the full flutter of impatience and delight, which is the most natural impulse in the prospect of the near enjoyment of a long-desired and long-delayed pleasure.

The play which was acted that night was King Lear—acted with all the advantage of scenery and

illusion, and by perhaps some of the best actors in the world;—and the effect on Jane was thrillingly overpowering. She sympathized with all her soul in the incidents of the piece; she saw her father—far unlike him as he was—in the dethroned and deserted king; she felt herself like a Cordelia, and wept till Mrs. Evans and her son told her they were quite ashamed of her. It did not matter to her at that moment what anybody thought about her; she felt raised above self, elevated to any self-sacrifice for those near and dear to her! She thought of her father, of John, of poor Rachel—ay, Rachel! and where was she? She thought of poor little Letty, who in her small way had sacrificed her prospects in life out of devotion to that little step-sister, till disinterestedness and self-forgetting seemed to her the highest angel virtues. She forgot the theatre, forgot the people about her; and a prayer rose in her soul, that she might be made an instrument of blessing to those who were so precious to her.

"Well, it has done me more good than twenty sermons!" said Jane, as they came out of the theatre as soon as King Lear was ended, without waiting for the after-piece, in order that Jane might be in time for the last omnibus.

As soon as they were in the street, just clear of the theatre-door, the figure of a woman, wrapped in a large cloak, and bearing something in her arms, stood on the pavement before them.

"For God's sake, give me something to buy bread with!" said the woman, addressing them. Mrs. Evans and her son were passing on: Jane stopped. "For God's sake!" said the woman. Was Jane's imagination excited by her feelings during the play, or was that voice indeed too familiar?

"I have eaten nothing for two days!" said the poor creature.

"Rachel!" exclaimed Jane, in a low voice, and feeling almost ready to faint.

"Come on, come on!" said Mrs. Evans; "you'll lose the omnibus!"

"You must not stand here," said Kemp.

Jane drew her arm from his. "Rachel!" continued she, addressing the woman; "oh, my God, Rachel, is it you?"

"I tell you, Jane, you'll lose the omnibus," repeated Mrs. Evans; "whatever are you stopping for?"

"I must stop," returned Jane; "I must know who this young woman is! Now tell me, for Heaven's sake," said she, turning to her again, "is it you, Rachel?"

"Who are you, woman?" interrupted Mrs. Evans, getting quite angry.

"It never will do to stand thus," whispered Kemp to her earnestly.

"Go on then! go on then!" returned Jane; "I am afraid of nothing; leave me with her; go with your mother, James. And now," said she, again turning to the woman, and drawing her a little aside, "tell me if you are Rachel; you know who I mean, if you are that unhappy girl, and you know also who I am!—Speak, dear Rachel; I will not be ashamed of you, let you be as wretched and miserable as you may."

The poor young creature began to sob bitterly, but made no reply.

"Let us walk on," said Jane, as Kemp again urged her; "I dare say it is not right to stand here; I have a friend's house just at hand, and there I will take you."

"Surely she will not bring that woman into our house! that I will never allow!" said Mrs. Evans to her son; and then trudged off, sorely out of humour, while James walked beside the two, the woman still continuing to

weep, and concealing her face as much as might be, in the folds of her cloak.

"She must come in as well as me," said Jane to Kemp, as they all three paused at the door together; "or I will take her on with me to Tottenham," added she, seeing him demur as to an assent.

"No," said Kemp, half hesitatingly; "but who is she, Jane?"

"I have no right to tell who she is," replied she; "it is enough that I will pay for what she has. Only this one night, James," said she; "ask it as a favour from your mother; do it as a favour to me, James—as the dearest, the best favour you can do me," added she, laying her hand on his arm, glad at that moment to have any influence over him.

James went to his mother, leaving the two in the narrow dark passage which led to the staircase.

"Oh!" said the young woman, in a voice almost inaudible from weeping, "to think of your finding me! I had hoped to have died without your knowing what was become of me! Oh, Jane! Jane!—and I wish I was dead, me and my baby too!"

"Baby!" exclaimed Jane. "Oh, Rachel, is it so bad as that?"

Rachel, for so we will now call her, began afresh to weep and sob, as if her heart would break.

Kemp was a long time before he came down, and then he said his mother would not make any objection—they might go up. Mrs. Evans did not make any objection in words; but we will not tell how ill-tempered she was, nor how reluctant to let Jane and her unfortunate sister sit up all night by the kitchen fire. We will pass all that; but we will not omit to tell how doubly kind was James Kemp that night—how he ran out and bought a loaf and milk for them, and how he boiled water for their tea; and, though he did not smile much,

.ooked so kindly on them both; and how Jane thought, 'Well, if there was one thing in this world which would make her love him, it was seeing him behave in that way!"

Poor Kemp! he staid out sadly late that night—later even than his master staid in the House—and nearly got a discharge from his place in consequence. But we will leave James, as we left his mother; and we will leave old Joseph also, who, not meeting Jane by the last omnibus, poor old man! got almost out of his senses with anxiety and terror, lest he knew not what dreadful fate had befallen her.

The story that Rachel had to tell was a short and sad, though very common one. She had made the acquaintance of a young man in Nottingham, who promised to marry her. Impatient to leave a home which was miserable, and too proud to take a servant's place, she listened unwarily to the allurements of her lover. Mark Griffiths's money came at that terrible time, when she began to suspect the perfidy of her suitor. Afraid of disgrace at home, she fled to a neighbouring town, where she believed her lover to be, but he was not there; and there news reached her of Mima Higgins's prosperity in London. She sold, therefore, some of her clothes, in order, with the remainder of Mark's money, to reach London too, in the hope that Mima would befriend her. Mima Higgins, however, was gone—gone, it was said, to Brighton, the gay mistress of a wealthy man. Forlorn as human being could be, and unfortunate, perhaps, rather than wicked, she stood aghast at the horrible prospect which a very short time sufficed to open before her.

The abandoned and the designing were round her; want was pressing upon her; the vastness, the heartlessness, the unmanagable wealth, and the equally unmanagable misery and poverty of London, overwhelmed

and terrified her. She got glimpses of its crime, that filled her with shuddering dread; she saw those, young as herself, reckless and hardened ministers of vice; she saw an abandonment of principle and virtue, and revelling and rejoicing in evil, which, unstable as had hitherto been her moral nature, revolted her very soul. Vice stood before her in all its native deformity; and she, that would have been gulled and allured by it, had it come veiled or adorned before her, stood like a petrified image of horror, with no power to flee.

Poor unhappy Rachel! she had fallen into the hands of the crafty and the cruel; yet she never became the willing tool they required.

Her child was born in the midst of scenes which she attempted not to describe. The sight of that living child was, she said, the first thing that touched her heart with a sentiment of human love in London. Love which no words could express, filled her heart towards it; her mother—oh, then she was only first capable of understanding and appreciating her own mother's love and virtues—her mother, her father, her sisters, how she loved them, as she had never loved them before! She opened her soul to no one, but wept in secret over her child. It was a girl; and, out of deep heart-love, she called it Jane.

Rachel had experienced misery in many shapes, the least of which perhaps were the common ones—cold, hunger, poverty, and sickness. How far she actually had sinned, her sister wished not to know, nor would Rachel tell.

Two years were now passed since she came first to London, and the days of her mortal pilgrimage were wearing to their end. She had no home, and had lived now for weeks in the bare streets, as she could, carrying her child in her arms, or dragging it along by the hand, and attracting charity, less by words than by the

appeals of a countenance on which a broken heart and the finger of death had written legible characters.

She said she knew that Jane was in London, but she had no desire to see her; she cared for nothing now in this world but her child. She had a sort of faith, she said, that for her innocent child's sake some helper or other would rise up; and now she had found her! She said she never would have been recognized by her sister; that she would have denied her own identity, had it not been for her child's sake; but that something within her own heart told her, when she saw them come out of the theatre door, "Now is the time—the saviour of thy child is at hand!"

Poor Jane! what an awful charge was thus laid upon her! what was she to do with the child? She sighed deeply, cast her thoughts and the burden of them upwards and upon God, and remained silent.

"I shall burden nobody long," said Rachel; "I will go out again into the streets, and die! But my child I will leave with you! You will care for her; you must, you shall!" said she, with a wild energy that suggested to Jane that perhaps her sister's brain was disordered. "Oh, Jane, Jane," continued she, dropping on her knees before her, "promise me this! It is a pretty child; it is an innocent child; it is a girl, Jane—only think of that; and I called it by your name! Cast it not off from you; it has no friend in all the wide world but you! No, no, Jane! I will not rise!" said she, repelling her sister's efforts to raise her; "I will kneel to you—I will throw myself on the ground at your feet, but I will not be refused! I have been wicked, Jane; I never was good like you; I never was worthy of you; but we are the daughters of one mother; and, not for my sake, Jane, but for hers who is now an angel in heaven, return good for evil; forget how wicked and unworthy I have been, and

grant me one request of my dying lips—take care of my child, and forget me!"

"Oh, Rachel! Rachel!" exclaimed Jane, throwing herself on her knees by her sister, and praying aloud, as she had never prayed till then, that God would be with them, that God would be a father to them, and help them through the depth and horror of this great darkness!

When Mrs. Evans made her appearance the next morning she was in considerably better temper than the night before; and, without a deal of persuasion, consented that Rachel, for a day or two, should become the inmate of an untenanted upper room, in which was a bed. Jane, without telling the relationship between them, said she would pay for what she had; that Mrs. Evans need fear no ill consequence from this permission; and that she herself would return in the evening with clothes and a few necessaries for her. Mrs. Evans did not like all this; she did not like not being made Jane's confidant in all her knowledge of this suspicious stranger, and of her plans in her behalf: therefore, though she had consented, she made Jane feel that she was far from satisfied.

Jane left the house to return to Tottenham. It was Sunday morning; and, being then church-time, the omnibuses were not running: so she walked leisurely homeward, glad of the calm fresh air and the opportunity to think over this sad circumstance, with its appalling demands upon her. She had formed no plan with regard to her sister; she could not tell, indeed, what was best to do farther than, for the present moment, to spare some of her own clothes for her use: glad that good old Joseph alone was at home, that thus, if she required another night at her own disposal, she might have it. She was half inclined to make the old man her confidant in the whole affair; for he was

very much her friend, and had, she thought, more native charity, even for wrong doers, than most people.

While she was thinking thus, a large placard, at the door of a great Methodist chapel, caught her eye. "Charity sermon, to be preached by the Rev. Joshua Mainwaring;" to be preached that very morning, and in that very chapel—was, in fact, being preached at that very moment! All at once an idea struck her: was not Mr. Mainwaring the very person to counsel with? he, the friend and counsellor of sinners, as his Great Master had been before him. Was not Rachel known to him? and, oh! what comfort and blessing might not reach that forlorn soul from the prayers and teaching of that good man. Jane did not forget how she had parted with the Mainwarings, but she remembered at that moment also, that they were Christians; and, with earnest faith in the goodness of Christian love, she doubted not but that they—both he and his wife, if she were in London—would forget their displeasure against her, in their joy to save an unhappy sinner.

The sermon was just at an end as she entered the chapel; Mr. Mainwaring had taken his seat in the pulpit, and the hymn was being given out. In the agitated state of Jane's mind there was something to her wonderfully consolatory and encouraging in the prayer with which Mr. Mainwaring closed the morning service. A feeling of hope and thankfulness filled her heart; and, pressing through the retiring congregation, she begged to be admitted to the vestry for a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Mainwaring.

A momentary coldness passed over his face as Jane presented herself before him, but it vanished almost as soon as it came. Jane begged for a private interview, for many persons were with him at the moment of her entrance; these he dismissed, and then conducted her

from the vestry into a well-furnished and rather handsome room, of the adjoining dwelling-house—of his own dwelling-house, in fact. Jane, as hastily as she could, yet not without tears, told him the sad history of Rachel, her own peculiar circumstances, and then besought him for counsel, if not for help. Without entering upon the subject, he rang the bell, and Mrs. Mainwaring entered. There was no coldness in her manner; she offered her hand to Jane, as if she thought her her equal, and they had parted friends. The truth was, things had mended in a worldly point of view with the Mainwarings, since Jane left them. They were no longer in narrow circumstances; they could afford now to pay for good servants, and they had them. Mr. Mainwaring held an important position, not in the Methodist connexion of a provincial town, but in the great national body: he felt himself to be appreciated. Money had been left them, which relieved them from the necessities of painful and rigid economy. And oh, how much, in many cases, are our views of life changed and cheered by a better income!

The Mainwarings heard what Jane had to say, with the most friendly interest, and promised not only to visit her unhappy sister, but to devise means for her comfort. A few moments suggested the plan; they knew a good Methodist widow who took in lodgers; she would receive her as an inmate, and there, at least during her sickness, she would be cared for. They said, moreover, they would endeavour to obtain pecuniary help for her from some of the rich of their congregation; that that very evening, as he did not preach again that day, he would visit her with Jane, and, in the meantime, all should be prepared for her reception with the widow.

Jane told them of the Quaker family with whom she lived; said she had a great fear of the Quakers know-

ing of her connexion with this unhappy girl; fancying, because they had so great a horror of dancing, that they would have no forbearance whatever towards an unhappy Magdalene like Rachel; and that, if this came to their knowledge, she would probably lose her place, which, under existing circumstances, she was most unwilling to do. She entreated, therefore, that for the present at least the Mainwarings would preserve her secret; and they, though they did not think quite as rigidly of the Quaker exactness, gave her the promise she required.

When she returned to her master's house, she found no one there, the gates locked, and all still and deserted. From Miss Winton's maid she learned that Joseph, distressed and alarmed at her delayed return, had set out in the course of the morning in search of her. She wondered, however, he was not returned.

Correct as the old gardener thought Jane's conduct generally, he could not but agree with Mrs. Evans, in thinking that this picking up of women in the streets, who were evidently no better than they should be, a very odd and unaccountable thing. He hurried back, therefore, to Tottenham, not a little vexed with her for giving him the sleepless, anxious night she had done, all on account of a good-for-nothing baggage that she had picked up out of the streets. It did not matter to Jane, however much the old man scolded; and he got quite angry even, when, in reply, she said she had done nothing but what was right, and, more than that, that she should go out again that same evening, and perhaps even the next too. She was not, she said, doing anything that was wrong; but only there were reasons why nobody could know anything of what she did, or where she went. She was not going to tell anybody, she said, or she certainly would have told him: but that this she must beseech of him, if he had any

regard for her, to think nothing of what she did, and, above all things, to keep the secret of her having something to conceal from all the Forster family, as well as from the knowledge of her two fellow-servants.

Now, certainly, this was putting Joseph's regard for her to a most severe test. He could not help thinking, just as Mrs. Evans had done, that it would only be civil in Jane to make a confidant of him—to tell him all, as he knew a part. He had not any objection in the world to keep a secret for her; and that was what Mrs. Evans had said; but to be let into a thing only by halves—to be allowed only to know as much as she had no power to keep from them—that was rather too much; so Joseph, just as Mrs. Evans had done before him, felt offended, nodded his head, and looked very cold and stiff, whilst poor Jane, too much wrapped up in her own thoughts, and too much troubled and perplexed by the whole affair, did not really notice how much displeased the old man was.

One person, however, there was in this affair who stood by Jane heart and soul, and that was James Kemp. His mother and he quarrelled about it; Joseph and he quarrelled about it. Jane's fidelity to Mark Griffiths never certainly was in such danger as at this time. "Well, I will say," thought Jane to herself, after she had paid her sister a visit in her new lodgings at the Methodist widow's, "that there never was anything so kind in this world as James's coming all that way from Westminster with that nice fruit for poor Rachel! And was there not a tear in his eye, as Rachel said, in answer to his remark, that he hoped she would soon be better—'Life may be pleasant, young man, to such as you and my sister Jane; but the sooner I'm out of the world the better, both for me and those belonging to me!' Poor Rachel! I'm sure there was a tear in James's eye; and, for me, I thought my heart would break."

The cook and Ellen came back on the Wednesday, and on the Thursday the whole Forster family. On the next evening, not the drab-liveried young man who had excited the attention of all before, but an equally suspicious, dark-green suit of livery on the person of a young man, was seen advancing through the back gate to the kitchen-door, and having then the audacity to inquire if Jane Ford was within. The cook and Ellen, and even old Joseph, looked out of different windows to see the interview between the two. There was not much to be seen; the dark-green livery began talking very earnestly, and then it seemed to all as if Jane were troubled at something; and then the two moved slowly on together towards the back gate again, where the laurel-bushes hid them from view, and stood talking together a long time.

How altered was Jane's manner! how grave, how silent, how sad! Nobody asked her what was amiss with her, and she talked to nobody, and never noticed how wonderfully civil the cook and Ellen were to old Joseph, nor even that the old man, though he was as snappish to them as ever, was no longer civil to her.

One morning, very shortly after their return, Mrs. Forster told Jane she wanted to speak to her in her own room. Nothing could exceed the cold severity of Mrs. Forster's manner. She said it was with extreme pain that they had discovered that, during their absence and the absence of her fellow-servants, she had not only been to the play, but had staid out the whole night.

Who could have told this? Could it have been Joseph? thought Jane, but she said nothing; and Mrs. Forster continued. She spoke of the sin of neglect of duty; of disobedience to masters, abuse of confidence, evil example, and then of the shameful immorality of plays, players, and playhouses—seeming to think the frequenters of such places, and the sanctioners of such people, on the broad way to perdition.

Jane thought of the sentiment of love, and the ability of self-sacrifice, which had so warmed her heart as she witnessed that beautiful play; but she did not attempt to argue; that would have seemed impertinent, not to say presumptuous. Much also, and not without reason, had good Mrs. Forster to say on the impropriety of stopping out through the night. Had she known why Jane had done so, she would not only have been less severe, but would have commended all that she had done. There is only too little confidence, too little open-hearted communication, between mistresses and their servants!

Was Jane not sorry for what she had done? asked Mrs. Forster. The least she could do was to show a sense of contrition. Jane refused to say she was sorry, further than the having displeased her mistress; refused to say she would not do so again, and refused also to give any account of her motives for this strange conduct.

"And now, further than this," continued Mrs. Forster, "only the last night, instead of going to thy usual place of worship, thou wast seen entering a small house in ——— Row, where thou remainedst two hours; the same house thou hast visited frequently of late."

Jane cast her eyes down, and looked confounded; at length, said she, "Be so good, Mrs. Forster, to tell me who has been my accuser."

"Dost thou deny it? Is any part of this accusation untrue?" asked the Quaker lady.

"No," said Jane, in a low voice, "it is not untrue; but I should like to know who has been my accuser—who has watched me thus narrowly."

"Ellen's brother," returned Mrs. Forster, "a youth named Louis Bates, once a fellow-servant of thine, has been thy accuser; he saw thee at the play, and ——"

"Louis Bates!" interrupted Jane, "Oh, Mrs. Forster, you know not what a wicked youth is that!"

"Thus thou seest," said Mrs. Forster, "that by entering a playhouse thou hast, by thy own showing, placed thyself in the hands of wicked people. Remember, Jane, they who will eat of forbidden fruit must pay the penalty."

"And who told the rest about me?" asked Jane, with a deep sigh.

"It is enough," replied Mrs. Forster, "that what I have heard is true. Wilt thou promise not to go to the house in ——— Row again?"

"I cannot promise," said Jane; "but, indeed ma'am, for no bad or disgraceful purpose have I gone there. The woman of the house is a decent Methodist widow."

"Whatever the woman of the house may be, Jane," replied Mrs. Forster, sternly, "persons of abandoned character lodge there."

The colour, which had been fading from Jane's cheeks for some time, quite left it now; she looked for one second as if she would faint, and then, calling up all her energy of mind, said, "People may say so; but our Lord himself did not spurn the Magdalene from before him."

"Jane," said her mistress, hurt by what she thought an impious use of scripture, "thou had better not apply the sacred writings thus. I am sorry for thee; but, such being thy present hardened state of mind, it is necessary that thou leave our family. Dost thou understand me?" inquired she, as Jane, overcome by these unexpected words, looked quite confounded and bewildered; "dost thou understand?"

"Yes, ma'am," returned poor Jane, "yes, ma'am, I do understand; but I must say, I never was so sorry in all my life before;" and, putting her apron to her eyes, she left the room.

Mrs. Forster was hardly less grieved than her maid. There was something so incomprehensible about her—so sincere and serious—as if so unwilling to give offence,

and yet so reserved and wilful—it was past her comprehension. She hoped, however, that Jane would, as she said, come to her senses, make the *amende* by an open confession, and thus be reinstated into the family's favour.

CHAPTER X.

THE FRIENDS OF THE MAID-SERVANT TESTED.

JANE, however, made neither confession nor concession, but went on in her own wilful, reserved way, just as before; requested to have money advanced her of what was in Mr. Forster's hands, for the use of which she gave no reason; and the very next Sunday night too, went again to the house in —— Row, whilst during the week, she had received visits from unknown women and girls, whom both the cook and Ellen declared not to be over and above respectable, and altogether seemed so altered from what she was, that everybody thought something very wrong indeed must be the cause of all this.

We have not mentioned before, what should be mentioned, however, that, amidst the sorrows of this time, nothing gave Jane greater comfort than to be reunited with the children of the Mainwarings, the favourite of whom still remained to be the gentle affectionate Samuel. Many a time, as she sate looking at him, she thought to herself, 'Surely our blessed Lord, as a boy, when he worked at his father's trade, and was obedient to the bidding of his mother, growing in favour both with God and man, was such as he." Had poor Jane known the pictures of the old masters, she would have seen that her feelings were founded in truth; for they too painted their youthful Christs not from ideals, but from models such as this, on which

the tenderness and beauty of a spiritual nature had impressed an almost divine character.

Everybody's heart in the house of the Forsters seemed turned against Jane, excepting that of the faithful old Joseph; and he, by this time having forgiven her want of confidence towards him, and seeing everybody treat her with coldness, lost not an opportunity to do her a kind turn or to say a kind word to her.

"Cheer up, Jane," he said one day to her; "it can't be a sweetheart, sure, that makes you so moping; but you needn't be afraid—I'll ask no questions: only if you want anybody to help you, why, you know old Joseph Williams is the man any day."

The next day old Joseph looked merrier than he had done ever since these affairs fell out, because he fancied he had got a cure for all her troubles in his hand, in the form of a pink paper letter, sealed with blue wax, which had been conveyed to him by the young man in dark-green livery, whom Joseph very well knew to be the same who formerly wore the drab suit.

Poor old man! with what joy did he take the first opportunity to thrust, in a very mysterious way, this said billet into her hand! It was a letter from James Kemp, written with all that young man's best skill in penmanship, and very elaborately indited; but, after all, it was not exactly a declaration of love, although anybody who read it would have thought it extremely like one. The immediate purport of it, however, was that the maid of a certain Mrs. Normacott, of Normacott Lodge, Surrey, was about being married, and that the said Mrs. Normacott would want another; therefore he, the writer, advised her to lose no time in applying for the situation, which, according to James, was one in ten thousand.

Jane was better pleased with the letter than if it had been a billet-doux written with the best feather of

Cupid's wing. She did not wish, of all things, to be out of place, especially with the present demands upon her little savings; so she asked and obtained permission to go to Normacott Lodge respecting the situation, and returned therefrom with a hope of success, provided Mrs. Forster would give her a satisfactory character. Miss Peters, she said, a governess she believed in Mrs. Normacott's family, would come on the following day for that purpose.

We have said nothing of poor Rachel Ford all this time, nor how comfortably Jane had provided for her; nor how the good Methodist preacher and his wife visited her daily; and how they had succeeded in arousing in her hardened and hopeless soul a sense of submission, and penitence, and confidence in the mercy and forgiveness of God—a willingness to live or a willingness to die, whichever might be His all-wise ordination. Medical advice, too, had been obtained for her, but no hope was given from the first. She was in a galloping consumption; and, in the third week, a few days only were given as the probable period of her life.

Jane did not see her often; but the words most frequently on the unhappy Rachel's lips were blessings on that sister who had promised, and whom she confidently believed, would be a mother to her unfortunate child. Poor Rachel! let us say nothing of the selfishness of her nature, which, without compunction, demanded so much from a sister, and that sister only a poor servant girl.

Miss Peters came to inquire Jane's character. Mrs. Forster could say and did say a great deal in her favour; but she told also, with the utmost candour, the causes Jane had given of offence—the play-going, the mysterious visits to the house in —— Row, and of a certain wilfulness and obstinacy of late, which had grieved her and quite passed her comprehension.

Miss Peters went, and Jane had the most serious fears that she should not obtain this situation; and that this character which Mrs. Forster gave would, by the same rule, prevent her obtaining any situation. The prospect was dark and discouraging.

An hour or two after Miss Peters was gone, Jane had to open the front door again to another visitor: it was the Rev. Joshua Mainwaring. There was a deep seriousness in his countenance, and tears stood in his eyes. "Jane," he said, "I am just come from your sister's—she is no more; at ten o'clock this morning she departed." The good man paused, wiped his eyes, and then continued, "Her end was peace; and for this let us bless the Lord. My dear young friend," continued he, taking her hand, and wishing to soothe her emotion, "the Lord hath given rest to a weary soul; he hath been long-suffering and full of mercy, and has not suffered her to perish uncared for or unsaved. You have been made the blessed instrument of his mercy; yes, my young friend, we will praise him for all these things."

Mrs. Forster, coming down stairs at this moment, Jane, unwilling to be seen thus weeping, disappeared in a side-room, leaving the preacher standing alone in the hall. Mrs. Forster had seen Mr. Mainwaring at Bible meetings, and knew his character to be that of an able and excellent man; she had also heard just lately that Jane had been seen at his chapel, and she was instantly glad to have an opportunity of speaking to him about her.

"I hope thou art well, Friend Mainwaring," said she: "I am pleased to see thee, and if thou have the time, shall be glad to have a little conversation with thee."

Mr. Mainwaring assented with pleasure, and was conducted up stairs again by the lady to her own room; and then, without preamble of any sort, she inquired

if he were not acquainted with her maid-servant, Jane Ford.

Mr. Mainwaring was somewhat of an absent man, and he forgot at this moment Jane's strict injunction, that the Quaker family should know nothing of her unfortunate sister; and, besides this, Mrs. Forster's question threw him suddenly off his guard: so all at once he began to tell how he had even then brought the news of the death of that servant's unfortunate sister. Mrs. Forster looked astonished, saying, she knew not that Jane had a sister in London, much less one ill; and in reply the good preacher gave the whole history —how she had rescued her from the streets, provided a home for her, besought his pastoral care for her, visited her, and even now was burdened with the care of that unfortunate sister's child. Mr. Mainwaring, whose nature warmed up at the contemplation of virtue—especially of virtue which demanded self-sacrifice—grew eloquent as he told this, and aided his eloquence by his tears. Mrs. Forster wept too.

Jane rose higher in the good Quakeress's esteem than she had ever been before; and, no sooner was Mr. Mainwaring gone than she called Jane before her, sent for her daughters into the room, and told them, in the poor girl's presence, what she had just learned. It was too much for Jane: she had thought Mrs. Forster an angel from heaven at first; now she wished she might kneel down and kiss the dust of her feet: but that would not do; so Jane said very little, and her silence was as eloquent as words.

The next act of Mrs. Forster's was to open her writing-desk, and indite a letter to Miss Peters, giving a hasty outline of what she had discovered; which was, she said, no more than bare justice to the character of a servant girl. That same evening also, Mr. Mainwaring received a letter, signed A.B., enclosing a *5l.* *nill*,

to be applied, the letter said, to the interment of the late Rachel Ford, and to defray the present necessary expenses of providing for the child.

"It can be from nobody but that good Quakeress," said the preacher to his wife; "so, don't blame me for betraying Jane's confidence. I don't think it will turn out in the end that I have done wrong in any way."

Mrs. Forster, a most conscientious member of a conscientious people, knew when she wrote to Mrs. Normacott that she would lose, by this means, an excellent servant, and one which, since these late events had come to her knowledge, she esteemed, nay, almost loved; but what of that? She looked at the broad question of justice between man and man, and spoke of her maid-servant as her heart, not her interest dictated; and Mrs. Normacott having read the letter, instantly desired Miss Peters to reply to it, by requesting Jane Ford to come over to Normacott Lodge; adding that, had she been Mrs. Forster, she would not so willingly have given up a servant of such extraordinary worth.

Jane took the stage to Normacott Lodge, and returned in the evening, the hired maid of Mrs. Normacott, upon whose service she was to enter the next week.

The Forsters blamed Jane for nothing but her want of confidence in them; and their kindness and consideration to her to the last moment were unabating. Jane suspected that the 5*l.* received by Mr. Mainwaring on behalf of her sister and the child, was sent by Mrs. Forster, and this redoubled her gratitude. The Mainwarings and the Forsters consulted together what was best to be done respecting the child, and all came to the agreement that Jane must consider it as left to her general care, assuring her that friends would be found to assist her; that the Methodist widow would take charge of it for the present; and that, when it grew older, there were orphan schools, and many benevolent insti-

tutions, in which Mrs. Forster and many a rich Methodist lady had interest, where it might be educated, and afterwards provided for.

All this was a relief beyond words; yet the poor girl never knew what anxiety and responsibility was till then.

Jane bought for herself neat, unexpensive mourning, and, in company with the Methodist widow and old Joseph, followed the remains of her sister to the grave the following Sunday.

Jane had not seen Mrs. Evans now for several weeks; and James, having left London with his master for his country seat, on the prorogation of parliament, all intercourse between her and the tailor's family seemed at an end. It was but right, however, she thought, to call on Mrs. Evans, and tell her the changes in her prospects, at the same time that she determined still to keep from her the knowledge of her relationship to poor Rachel. On Mrs. Evans, therefore, she called; but Mrs. Evans was colder and stiffer than ever.

"A mighty civil thing this of you to call on me," said she, "now you have got so many new friends, Methodists and all that."

Jane said, it seemed to her as if Providence had brought her in Mr. Mainwaring's way just at the time when she wanted such a counsellor. Mrs. Evans, she said, never could know how much reason she had to thank Mr. Mainwaring

"No," replied Mrs. Evans, "nor do I want to know; and yet, after all, I maybe know more than you think for: perhaps you suppose I saw no family likeness between you and the young woman you picked up in the streets. I never could have thought, Jane Ford, that you had disreputable connexions like that; and I should be mighty sorry for my Jemmy to connect himself with you; and so I tell you, point-blank and plain,

and thus you need not say that I have ever deceived you!"

"Oh dear!" said Jane, "whatever does all this mean? I am sure it is very unkind."

"Unkind!" repeated Mrs. Evans, in a cool rather than angry manner, "No, Jane Ford, it's honest; that's what it is! You haven't treated me like a friend; never could let me into any secret of yours—never gave me credit for any regard to you, though I have treated you more like a daughter than anything else; couldn't tell me it was your sister that you'd got there, yet could make no secret of it to Mrs. Gillman, in —— Row. No, Jane," continued she, in the tone of a much-injured person, "you've no right to complain; people must look to be treated as they've treated others. I've done a deal for you. What, I should like to know, would have become of you, if it hadn't have been for me, when you left the Tremaines?"

"I think God would not have left me friendless," returned Jane.

"You might have been on the streets, like your sister," continued Mrs. Evans, "if it had not have been for me; yet you never think of that—oh, no! But this is true, I'll never volunteer my kindness again as long as I live!"

"Mrs. Evans," replied Jane, deeply wounded by the spirit of this speech, "I'll never deny that you have been very kind to me, and I wished to have remained friends with you; but if you will be affronted in this way—"

"Tread on a worm and it will turn," interrupted Mrs. Evans; "and I'm flesh and blood, Jane Ford. And another thing I'll tell you—I've seen many little things I didn't like: there was that time-piece—"

"Mrs. Evans!" interrupted Jane, now bitterly angry, "every word that I said about that time-piece was

honestly true. Mr. and Mrs. Forster both believe it, and, if a letter will reach Mrs. Tremaine anywhere, I'll make her say so. And it's very unkind of you to begin on that subject—that it is!" said Jane.

"Well, it's no use talking," remarked Mrs. Evans; "but yet one thing I must tell you: I've given Jemmy his discharge if he's anything to do with you. Jemmy's young and good-looking, and plenty will be ready to jump at him."

"Good bye, Mrs. Evans," said Jane, advancing towards the door. "I thank you from my heart for all your kindness to me; but I wish you'd waited for some real offence before you had taken it."

"Good bye," returned Mrs. Evans, coldly, and with her back turned towards Jane; and yet, scarcely was she out of the door when she was vexed with herself, both for what she had said and done. "I did not mean to have gone so far; I've half a mind to call her back," said she, looking through the window after her; and then, for the first time, she noticed that she was in black. "Dear me!" said she, "why, her sister must be dead, then: well, I'm more vexed now than ever! And what a pretty neat figure she is! And yet," added Mrs. Evans, by way of palliative to her own feelings, "she has not behaved well to me—that she hasn't; she's so uncommon close."

It was a painful thing to Jane also to have this parting with Mrs. Evans, and she could not help crying as she went back, for the last day, to Tottenham; nor could she resist a sort of uneasy curiosity as to how James felt towards her. She would be sorry to lose his regard, his friendship, nay, almost his love; and yet, with such a mother, even if Mark Griffiths were out of the way, how could she ever think of marrying him?

The cook and Ellen, ever since it was known that Jane was going, had become particularly kind to her,

whilst old Joseph, unlike Mrs. Evans, had forgotten and forgiven the want of confidence towards him, and treated her, poor old man, as if he had no one care in this world but how to show his respect and admiration of her. He said no longer that, if he were a young man, it would be hard to choose between her and the Miss Wintons' maid; but he said, and he felt sure too, that if he was a young man he would try to get her for a wife, as sure as ever he was born; but, as he was not young, he would do the next good thing—he would recommend her a husband, and that was James Kemp, who was very fond of her, and who even now, he said, was saving money, he knew, for her sake. But he wasn't going to blab—oh no! though he might know something of James's mind.

Poor old Joseph! the day that Jane went he looked perfectly woe-begone. "And now, fare thee well, Jane," said he—for, from living so long with the Quakers, he had learned to talk like them: "fare thee well!" said he, as he went with her to the stage which took her to Normacott Lodge, "and don't think that thou made a bad day's work of it when thou first saw old Joseph Williams. Fare thee well, Jane; and I wish thee luck—that I do, with all my heart!"

Jane was quite affected, and the sight of her tears made the old man's heart warmer and sadder than before.

"Pray, sir," said he to Mr. Forster, the evening of that same day, "can I have a bit of talk with you?" The request was granted. "I've a mind, sir, to make my will," said Joseph.

"That is all right," replied Mr. Forster, "and what our society enjoins upon its members as an imperative duty. I have urged thee often to make thy will."

"Maybe, sir, you've pen and paper at hand?" said Joseph, "and would be so good, sir, to write down what I wish." The good Quaker placed pen and paper

before him, and said, "Thou hast relations, Joseph, I think?"

"Two nephews," returned he; "but neither want help from me: the one is a hatter, in good business; the other has married a rich wife."

"Thou hast three hundred and seventy pounds, on good security," said the Friend, "and seven-and-twenty pounds in my hand, at 5 per cent. interest; all which money, Joseph, thou hast honestly and honourably accumulated: it is a nice little sum, and, if a blessing goes with money, it will surely go with this, for thou hast been a faithful servant for many years."

Joseph wiped his eyes, and said that he was greatly obliged to his master; he hoped his money would do good, and take a blessing with it, where he meant to leave it."

Mr. Forster took the pen in his hand, and waited for instructions. "You know, sir, what's right to say in such matters; but I wish all to be made fast and sure," said Joseph—"fast and sure, sir, so as there can be no dispute after I'm dead and gone. And now, be so good as to write down that I leave all that I'm worth, after the expenses of my funeral are paid—and I'd have that cheaply done—to my late respected, and, I may say, beloved, fellow-servant, Jane Ford."

What made old Joseph fall a-crying then, there is no knowing; but so he did, and Mr. Forster himself wiped his eyes.

"She is an excellent young woman, Joseph," said he; "and, seeing that thy relations do not need thy help, thou hast not done amiss in leaving thy money to her; but we will hope, Joseph, that it will be many years before she has the benefit of thy will. If, in the meantime, thou wishest any fresh disposition of thy property, it can easily be done."

"That I shall not, sir," returned the old man; "but be so good to get it drawn out on a regular stamp, and

then I'll sign it before proper witnesses. It will make my mind a deal easier when all is done."

"It shall be done, Joseph," said his master.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BEGINNING OF MRS. CASEY'S PLOTS.

Mrs. Normacott was a gentlewoman of the old school: she wore large laced caps, and stiff silk gowns, and was very precise and exact in everything. All her domestic arrangements went on like clock-work; her servants, old, steady, and respectable, knew the routine of their duties to the letter; nothing varying in its course from year's end to year's end. Mrs. Normacott visited very little, though once or twice in the season she might be seen, like a stately piece of old-fashioned life, in the splendid London drawing-room of her fashionable daughter, the Hon. Mrs. Grafton—that is to say, when Mrs. Grafton was in London; for the last several years she had been in Italy, whence, however, she was now expected in a few weeks. Mrs. Normacott was old, and her mind, never of a very strong character, was now one of those which took impressions from the objects nearest to it—meaning well, and conscientious by principle, though vascillating almost as the wind. All, however, was kept right and straight by Miss Peters, an excellent noble-minded lady, who lived with Mrs. Normacott, partly as a companion to her, and partly as superintending governess of the young Therese Normacott, the old lady's grandchild—her only grandchild, for Mrs. Grafton had no family, and this was the daughter of her son and favourite child, who, with his wife, died in India, leaving this one dear creature to the care of his mother. Therese Normacott was nine years old, and beautiful as an angel. Her portrait was

known as one of the most celebrated among those of the children of the nobility. She had been modelled in clay, she had been chiselled in marble, and one of the most beautiful pictures modern painter ever drew, was one of Mrs. Normacott and her grandchild. All the picture-loving world had stood wondering before it, as it hung in the exhibition; and from that day the fortunate painter found his fame and his success established.

"In mourning!" said Mrs. Normacott to Jane, by way of salutation, the first moment she saw her: "you must not wear mourning in my service; it would make me quite low-spirited. Change your dress, and then I will speak further with you."

Poor Jane!—and that mourning, to say nothing of the money it had cost, was consecrated to her heart by sad affliction—it was very mortifying; but she changed her dress, and then presented herself again. Mrs. Normacott was pleased with her altered appearance, and began to talk with her of her more important duties, one of which would be the getting up of the old lady's handsome lace, and the making up of her old-fashioned caps, which were invariably made after one model, and that not a difficult one, although requiring great exactness. Jane, as we know, was clever with her needle, and, having a good deal of her mother's millinery talent, felt sure that she should give satisfaction in this respect at least.

Mrs. Normacott talked with Jane as any old gentlewoman, willing to be gracious, might talk to her maid; but one thing seemed odd—she addressed her by the name of Moore.

"Ford is my name, if you please, ma'am," said Jane.

"I never trouble myself," returned Mrs. Normacott, "with the names of my maids: I have never had but one name for them these forty years. One name is just as good as another to a servant."

"Yes sure, ma'am," said Jane, with great humility;

thinking, nevertheless, that if Mrs. Normacott had chosen to call her Higgins, she should not have thought so.

No sooner was Jane come to Normacott Lodge than she heard the return of the Hon. Mrs. Grafton from Italy, talked of. Her great house in Portland Place was prepared for her, and much was told of her beauty, of her wonderful talents, and the splendid *soirées* she gave, at which the witty, the wise, and the wealthy, say nothing of the lions of the time, whatever they might be, were found. Mrs. Grafton, a munificent patron of the arts, wrote poetry, and plays, and novels; translated from the French, German, and Italian; painted in oil, and modelled in wax and clay Books without end were dedicated to her; presentation copies crowded her tables; and, wherever she came or wherever she went, a crowd of admirers and dependants followed her.

Mrs. Grafton, in her way, was undoubtedly a very great lady; and a great lady, in another way, came with her, and that was Mrs. Casey, her woman. Mrs. Casey was no favourite with the quiet old domestics of Normacott Lodge, and from them Jane heard much. Mrs. Casey, they said, was ten times harder to please than Mrs. Grafton, ten times prouder, and thought ten times more of herself. She had lived in Mrs. Grafton's service many years, had travelled with her, and had acquired great influence with her; she was supposed to be the depository of some weighty secrets, and, it was said, made a handsome thing of the bribes people of all kinds put into her hands for admittance to the great lady. That was the *on-dit* of the servants' hall; but, as it has no higher authority, we do not vouch for its truth.

That Mrs. Casey, however, had influence with her lady was an unquestioned fact; and many things through her agency had been brought about, which perhaps, strictly speaking, had been far better unac-

complished. Not only had she, in the first instance, gained this ascendancy with her mistress, and then maintained it through many years, but some little of the same ascendancy had she also over Mrs. Normacott herself, although that old lady had sometimes been known to say, that she would be sorry to have a person so much a woman of the world about her as was Mrs. Casey; but that really, after all, she was a wonderful creature, and just suited for Mrs. Grafton's service; and yet, clever as Casey was, she could neither read nor write. Well, that only proved, the old lady would assert, that reading and writing were not at all necessary for the making of clever servants: and for that very reason she never had much notion of taking that niece of Casey's into her own service, on whose education, her daughter informed her, by way of recommendation, Casey had spent so much money.

This little hint may explain, that Mrs. Casey had been educating a young person she called her niece, as lady's maid, with an especial eye to the service of Mrs. Normacott. She had learnt French, hair-dressing, and millinery in Paris; had lived with a Lady Somebody twelve months in Florence, and was now returning, in Mrs. Grafton's train of servants, to England, being intended by Mrs. Casey to supply the place of the lately-married servant at Normacott Lodge. Mrs. Grafton herself, at the request of her woman, had even written to her mother on the subject; but Mrs. Casey had, unknown to herself, a non-admirer in the person of Miss Peters, who, aware of that crafty individual's true character, determined, if possible, to keep any connexion of hers out of the family, and especially from about the person of the old lady herself. She had been strenuous, therefore, on behalf of Jane Ford; and, having now watched her narrowly for the few weeks she had lived in the family, had become, though unknown to Jane herself, her warm and determined friend.

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Grafton to her mother, at one of their first interviews, "that you cannot offer poor Casey's niece this situation: she is a clever girl, with the nicest manners I ever saw in one of her station, and excellently well educated."

"Too high for her station," said Mrs. Normacott.

"Nothing of the kind," returned her daughter; "she is a nice, modest, unpretending girl, and her skill in millinery is wonderful. Poor Casey! it has been the wish of her heart for years that Henrietta should live with you. She has ten times the style of your present maid, and would any time, when Miss Peters is otherwise engaged, read you either French or English admirably: I wish you would let her read some scenes from Racine to you some morning."

Poor Mrs. Normacott began to think, perhaps, after all, Henrietta Casey would have suited her better than her present maid, quiet, and neat, and respectful as she was: she almost wished Miss Peters had not hurried her decision so much.

At the mention of Racine's plays, Mrs. Grafton suddenly recollected what she wanted to say to her mother about a packet of new English books which she had sent her. Mrs. Normacott, although she did not read much herself, heard a great deal of reading, especially of poetry, which had always been a passion with her. Her daughter sent her much of the new poetry that was published, and especially all that was dedicated to herself, or when she was interested in the authors.

"Oh, here it is!" said Mrs. Grafton, selecting an unpretending volume from among a mass of others; "this is the book I want you to particularly admire; its author is young and poor, singularly good-looking, and one of the most high-minded young men I ever met with. He has related his whole life to me; and I declare to you, I never felt so humble before an individual,

yet so proud of our common human nature, or so conscious of the dignity and beauty of the human spirit, as I did in hearing this poor man relate his experiences, his sufferings, and his aspirations. God! what are we rich, we well-educated, luxuriously-living rich people in comparison of a poor man like this, who has suffered poverty and hunger, and, what is more galling even than these, the scorn and neglect of the ignorant and the proud, and yet has maintained his faith in the good, his love of the pure and beautiful—a hoping, trusting, cheerful spirit, spite of all these things! I would you could hear him tell," continued Mrs. Grafton, with almost tearful enthusiasm, "of his wanderings on the continent! Oliver Goldsmith's were nothing to them. Read his Sonnets in St. Peter's at Rome, his Hymn to the Genius of the Middle Ages, another poem of his, called Poverty and Genius—it is one of the noblest poems in the language: and then, a Night Scene in an Hospital at Ghent; and besides these, a set of little poems, twelve in number, called the Joys and Sorrows of Life—little gems these, and the first of his poems I ever read; they were published in a newspaper. These are the poems," said Mrs. Grafton, putting the volume into her mother's hand, "which I particularly call your attention to, though the whole will please you."

Mrs. Normacott turned to the title-page, and read, 'Poems, by John Ford.' "A very unpretending title-page," said she.

"Ford is a good name," returned her daughter. "Ford and Massinger, you know."

"Miss Peters shall read them to me," said the old lady; "but you must let me see this *protegé* of yours."

"He often comes to me," said Mrs. Grafton: "great poet as he is, I want to find something more certain than poetry for him to depend upon. I have introduced him to ——, and ——, and ——; but, bless me, poets and authors are so jealous of one another! I want

to get some place for him; I have spoken to Sir —— and Lord ——, and hope I may succeed."

At that very moment Jane Ford, unaware of Mrs. Grafton being with her mistress, entered with a cap in her hand, which she had been ordered to make up and bring in as soon as ready.

"It is of no consequence," said the sweet voice of Mrs. Grafton, as Jane apologized, and was quietly retiring; "let me look at that cap." She turned it round, and thought that even Henrietta Casey could not have done it better; she said, therefore, it was remarkably well done; and when she had left the room, she observed to her mother, that she really was a pleasing-looking girl, and had something quite superior in her manner. Who was she?

Mrs. Normacott, who had a wonderfully short memory, could tell nothing about that—Miss Peters, however, knew; but, as it was not of sufficient importance to send for Miss Peters about, no more was said. Mrs. Grafton had no interest in her, farther than as the rival of Henrietta Casey; and seeing her thus, thought Mrs. Casey's best way would be to look out for another situation for her niece. She told her so, therefore, that evening; but Mrs. Casey, though she seemed acquiescent at the time, had made up her mind that Henrietta should live at Normacott Lodge, or nowhere. A few months sooner or later, she said to herself, did not matter; she could afford to keep Henrietta out of place to wait for a situation like this; and, in the meantime, she had greatly over-estimated her own abilities if she could not out-general them all.

Nobody, therefore, could be blander to all parties than was Mrs. Casey. She made acquaintance in the most friendly manner with the unsuspecting Jane Ford; learnt where she had lived, who were her acquaintance, and who had been her fellow-servants, and then quietly lay by till the engines she set to work produced

her some material on which to act; and thus months went on.

Jane sate one day behind the screen in Mrs. Normacott's dressing-room, making up a very handsome lace cap for an approaching evening which she was to spend at her daughter's. The lovely young Therese Normacott was threading beads for her amusement at a little table near her grandmother, and Miss Peters had just taken her seat for an hour's reading to the old lady. "No, not that volume of Bulwer's," said Mrs. Normacott, seeing Miss Peters take up one which they had left half finished on the day before; "as I am so soon to meet Bella's *protegé*, her favourite poor poet, you must read me something of his. I must talk to him, of course, about his own poetry, and I want my memory refreshing."

"I will read you my favourites," said Miss Peters, rising for the volume; "that string of real diamonds, called the Joys and Sorrows of Life."

Jane, who sate behind the screen, never, as we know, was much of a reader herself; she knew very little about books, ancient or modern: but since she had lived in the present situation, a new source of delight had opened to her in the listening to these morning readings, at which, whenever they took place in the dressing-room, she, though unseen, was mostly present. She had ventured, too, encouraged by the general affability and kindness of Miss Peters, to speak to her sometimes of what was read, and this excellent woman was this very day curious to know what effect this poetry of a poor man—one of her own class—would produce upon her. She selected, therefore, these very poems, her own favourites, in which the experience of an individual was made to tell so exquisitely and truthfully upon the broad principles of human nature. Jane listened with an interest more intense by far than Mrs. Normacott, to those beautiful poems, so feelingly read.

How was it? thought she. What strange familiar spirit spoke in them? They brought to her the home of her childhood, her parents, her brothers and sisters, their wanderings in the meadows to gather the spring crocuses.

"Dear! dear!" thought Jane, "that anybody should have felt just as I did!" and then a stream of love for John, that gentle, affectionate brother, who was a poet too, and for little Stephen, who had died of the fever, came over her soul; for this poet too must have seen those dear to him die. And he spoke of partings also —partings as severe as those by the hand of death. Jane thought how dull she must have been never to have felt what partings really were before; but a glow now came over her heart, like the warmth and gladness of May sunshine, for the poet sung of household meetings, of hearts long separated, meeting and mingling like united waters; and she rejoiced to think that, poor servant-girl as she was, and not rich, and powerful, and great, as she supposed the poet to be, such meetings might be in store for her.

She told Miss Peters, in answer to her questions, something of all this feeling, but only something; she was too diffident to open her heart fully: however, from that moment, Miss Peters thought John Ford a truer poet than ever she had thought him before.

John Ford, the poor poet, and Jane Ford, the servant-girl—how was it that it never entered into the head of Miss Peters that these two might be connected? We know no farther than that it never did. Jane was known, however, at Normacott Lodge by no other name than Moore, and Miss Peters, perhaps, like Mrs. Normancott, forgot that she had any other.

The Hon. Mrs. Grafton had spoken of her *protegé* to all the world of her acquaintance; through her interest his books had been praised in the most influential reviews and magazines; and others of a lower

class, taking up the cuckoo cry, had praised it likewise. Ford had been now the lion of a season, and people were beginning to be tired of all praise. Authors and poets, Mrs. Grafton said, were all jealous of one another, and she still maintained her poet's cause warmly, because others blamed. Some blamed and disliked him now, because he was poor; others because his opinions were too liberal and independent—they detected radicalism and chartism, and all kinds of dangerous isms in his writings. Others again disliked, because he was unquestionably a true poet; and some because Mrs. Grafton was so zealous in his cause.

"It was mortifying and discouraging to see people," Mrs. Grafton said, "who had begun with promises, stand aloof now, without any cause, or as if they had done everything, when, in fact, they had done nothing; it was mortifying and discouraging, especially as Sir —— had given away, only the very last week, to a good-for-nothing fellow, without any claims whatever on the public, the very place he had half promised to her poor *protegé*. And how grieved she was for her poor *protegé!* He was suffering the pains of hope deferred. She suspected him to be much poorer than he confessed; she had just discovered that his best helper of late, and perhaps his best friend in the end, was an old acquaintance of his own class. Ford had told her of this true good friend, who had come all the way up to London on seeing the title of his book, and now proposed to him some little scheme of a bookselling shop.

Whatever Mrs. Grafton imagined of the pains of hope deferred in Ford's case, she knew nothing of what he really suffered. One day flattered, the next abused; patronized by the proud, lionized by the vulgar; called ungrateful, and treated as if he really were so, because he would not kiss the hands that would have made him servile; trembling lest his few friends should become weary of him; hoping, fearing, in a state of uncertainty;

knowing what poverty really was, and seeing before him no prospect of independence. How little indeed was he to be envied!

Somebody of his own class, as Mrs. Grafton said, had proposed that Ford should commence business as a bookseller; but, said that lady, no poet is fit for trade. That is true; fit for trade no poet certainly ever was; but when a man has passed through poverty, and drunk to the dregs the even bitterer cup of dependance, what, if his mind be of a noble character, will he not endure to achieve his own independence? Poor Ford! he was anxious about the little book-shop, although he knew, even better than Mrs. Grafton herself, that a true poet is sadly unfit for trade.

Let us now, on Ford's account, turn back about ten days as to time, and see him sitting one morning in his very humble lodgings, with a sheet of paper before him, and a pen in his hand. He had sate thus for an hour or two, yet had not as yet written a word. Alas! it was many months now since he had written as he used to write: he feared that the spirit of poetry, like a false friend, had deserted him; he recalled the time when thoughts and words flowed from his heart like a mountain torrent, fresh, glowing, and full of power; now all was constrained and cold; yet, how much more needful was it now to write well, even than then; now, when patrons were cooling, and his name dying, as he feared, from the public heart; and when, also, in the distance, he seemed to see approaching a spectre form which he knew so well—hated and dreaded poverty! Oh, after all his aspirations, to become a begging poet! Heavens! what a dreary, disheartening prospect!

While he was thus thinking, his door suddenly opened, and a tall, well-dressed, gentlemanly-looking person, with a wondrously kind countenance entered. John Ford looked at him for one moment, and then, throwing down his pen and starting up, gave him his

hand, exclaiming, almost with tears in his eyes, "God bless me! Mark, is it you?"

Yes, it was Mark Griffiths! and never was greeting more cordial than his. Ford threw on a shovel-full of coals, in the gladness of his heart, although he had been sparing his coal for a whole week before; while Mark rubbed his hands, and told him how he had seen his book reviewed in a Nottingham paper, and had set off immediately to find him out, and, if he needed it, to help him also. Mark Griffiths was no poet himself, but he had a heart as warm as any poet that ever lived; and so, after he had heard all John's history, and told his own, which had been a cheerful upward course, he proposed to John the little scheme of a bookseller's shop, of which we heard before, through the remarks of Mrs. Grafton.

"I shall never thank you as I ought to do," said John, in the course of the next hour's conversation. "I have heard, from young Dunnett, of Nottingham, all you did for poor father."

"Nothing, nothing," returned Mark; "you think too much of these things. "Your poor father died happily, and that was a comfort. What I did was little, however, in comparison of what that poor little Letty has done for years. Oh, but those union workhouses are horrible places!" exclaimed Mark, after a pause, as the remembrance of what he had seen when he found Ford in one, rushed upon his mind; "your father, however, was spared the misery of dying in a union workhouse, and that is a mercy; but Letty's devotion and thoughtfulness surpass words. Poor Letty! your father owed the comfort of his last days to that good step-daughter."

"And he lies buried by my mother," said John; "Dunnet told me that; how decently he was buried, and how you had ordered a grave-stone for them both. God bless you for it, Mark!" said John, giving his

hand, and not at all ashamed of the tears that filled his eyes.

"Nothing prevented poor Letty,' said Mark, "after your father's death, from accepting a home with Mrs. Greaseley."

"And little Sally?" asked John, with some anxiety.

"The good old lady has taken them both," said Griffiths. "My mother and she have taken a house together: how they agree about Methodism and Church-of-Englandism I don't know, but they seem wonderfully happy together. Neither Letty nor Sally will ever want friends again. There is a watchful Providence over us all, Ford—that you may depend upon."

John sighed, yet felt in his inmost soul that Providence also would care for him. The two talked long, and talked confidentially too, of what lay nearest to the hearts of both—of Jane and of Rachel. Griffiths said he had accidentally seen Mima Higgins. "Good Heavens!" exclaimed he, "what a creature she is! she says she is happy; according to her nature, she may be so."

"Heaven grant," said Ford, "that Rachel be not such as she!"

"She declares," continued Griffiths, "that she never saw Rachel in London, although she knows her to have come here. Of Jane, thank God, she knows nothing!"

"I have traced Jane," said her brother, "so far as living with a Captain Tremaine, in ——— Square; but at is three years since. Tremaine became bankrupt, and was outlawed. Poor Jane," continued he, "my heart aches to see her! How often have I looked round on the brilliant companies of beautiful women I have been introduced to, and tried, just for my heart's illusion, to see my sister's lips or eyes among them! Poor Jane!—we parted at the Trent-bridge turnpike, five years ago."

"John," said Mark, laying his hand on his friend's arm, and with a countenance suddenly overshadowed, "you know not the doubts and uncertainties that agitate me. What if Jane should not be in London—should have left England—or should be married? What a fool I have been to lose sight of her thus! Mother promised to write regularly to her: she has lost sight of her for these three years! And so as I loved her! so as I have been toiling for her! I have worked my way upward in life; a prospect of independence, not to say wealth, is before me: all this I have done for her—perhaps, after all, to find her another's!"

"No," said John, wishing to assure his friend, rather than being assured himself, "if she loved you once, Mark, "she is true to you still. Jane is not one to marry in a hurry."

The two friends talked yet farther: they talked of John's prospects, of his disappointments, and his anxieties. Mark Griffiths did not sympathize half as much with the feelings of the poet, as with those of the man struggling after independence: they were feelings which which he understood well.

CHAPTER XII.

THE END OF MRS. CASEY'S PLOTS, AND A HAPPY MARRIAGE.

But it is high time that our readers knew something more about the false-hearted and plotting Mrs. Casey. We will, therefore, make ourselves acquainted with her cogitations on the afternoon of the day on which the splendid house in Portland Place was prepared for a brilliant assembly, and to which our poor friend, John Ford, was invited.

"The more I think on that girl at Normacott Lodge," said Mrs. Casey to herself, "the more determined am

I to get her out of her place. She's just the one to get on the blind side of the old lady—is so quiet, and has really something so genteel about her—fiddle-faddles about the old woman in such an artful way. Old people are so silly! She does get up her lace very well, and her caps are uncommon well made; but what then? Henrietta could do that just as well; and then, Henrietta's a far cleverer girl—will never lose sight either of her interest or of mine; and, bless me! what haven't I paid in schooling for her, say nothing of millinery and hairdressing, and all along with an eye to this same place. Why need I have brought her out of Lady ——'s place, in Florence, but for thinking of this? Well, well, it matters not; I know enough how to unsettle Moore with the old lady—thanks to her nicety about morals, and all that. The story about the child in —— Row will do my business, without Louis Bates about the French time-piece, though that's good in its way. It's a miserable thing I can't write a little myself; and someway, I don't care to set Henrietta about it; the butler might do it for me, but then, when he's drunk he blabs; the other fellows would not do it as it should be done. But, stay! I have the idea now—my lady's poet, Ford—that's the man; I'll ask my lady if he would write a letter for me: I'll beg her to ask him; he's under a world of obligations to her; and, if I'm not mistaken, like many another poor fellow beside, she sits nearer to his heart than is good for his happiness: but that's no business of mine; only he shall write my letter—that's certain!"

Mrs. Casey was as smooth as oil to her lady that evening, and as flattering as a syren. Mrs. Grafton looked uncommonly well; her velvet dress fitted her superbly, her beautiful hair was braided with more than common grace on her noble forehead; there was, in short, a success in her toilet that night that put her in perfect good humour with all the world. Mrs. Casey

preferred her request. She wanted a letter writing of the greatest importance to her—did her lady think Mr. Ford would write it for her? Mrs. Grafton undertook to make the request on her behalf, and promised, without doubt, his ready acquiescence. Whether, however, Mrs. Grafton, in the midst of the triumphs of that splendid evening, would have remembered her promise is doubtful, had she not overheard the remarks of two ladies respecting her appearance, both agreeing that not only was her figure the most perfect in the world, but her Abigail, Mrs. Casey, the most accomplished also. "Oh, poor Casey and her letter!" thought Mrs. Grafton; and, turning round, John Ford was standing near her. Poor Ford! there was a charm in every word this beautiful woman uttered, which thrilled to his heart like words of lightning. Mrs. Casey was right, when she insinuated that his admiration of her verged upon passionate love. "You will oblige me greatly, Mr. Ford," concluded she, "if you will write this letter for poor Casey; she is an excellent creature, and has, I believe, some trouble or other just now, from which she thinks this letter is to relieve her. You will oblige me. Mr. Ford, by becoming her amanuensis."

Ford bowed, and sighed, and yet felt happy to be requested by her to write a letter, even for her servant.

The next day, when Mrs. Grafton took a drive in the Park, Mrs. Casey took a cab, and drove to Ford's lodgings. The business was soon entered upon, and the paper, which on her entrance lay before the poet ready to receive "a sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow," received instead the following effusion, which, in obedience, to Mrs. Grafton's bidding, he wrote down, unquestioning, to Mrs. Casey's dictation:—

"Honoured Lady—Knowing your high sense of propriety, and your wish to keep your household spotless, I have been induced to pen this to you, to warn you against an individual in your service, of whose true character you are by no means aware;—an individual of so much cunning, as to impose even upon you; an individual

who, though young, has been guilty of many errors—not to give them blacker names.

"I know, honoured lady, how your virtuous soul will shrink from charges of this nature against any one of your household; and you will say, Point out the offender—let me know who it is, that, soiled in character, wears this mask before me; let me know who it is, that they may be driven from my presence!

"Honoured lady, the offender, the masked person, is Moore—the smooth-spoken, seemingly well-behaved Moore! I see how you are shocked! I know your excellent heart, and grieve to have wounded it; but truth, honoured lady, is a sacred thing; truth will stand and prevail, and truth must and shall out! Let Moore be asked who took the French time-piece from Captain Tremaine's? Let her be asked about the child which she maintains in ——— Row. Let her be asked these things, and then see if truth will not shame even her.

"Honoured madam, I have the honour to subscribe myself ——"

John Ford, who had implicitly written down the above at the literal dictation of Casey, here paused, because she did not supply the name.

"Paul Pry's rather vulgar," said she; "can't you hit upon some good name, Mr. Ford, which means seeing in the dark, finding out hidden things, or something of that sort."

"Then you don't sign it with your own name?" said Ford.

"Bless you!" exclaimed Casey, "it's an anonymous letter. I'm so vexed to see a good lady, like Mrs. Normacott, imposed upon by a worthless young huzzy; but I'm not going to thrust myself bodily into the business!"

"Anonymous letters of this kind," said Ford, throwing down his pen, are cowardly things! Does Mrs. Grafton know the kind of letter I have written?"

"Every word of it," said Mrs. Casey, who never was very nice about truth; "didn't she tell you herself? and didn't she say you would oblige her by writing it?"

Casey did not know that she had actually said so. This was on her part only a bold stroke; but it was so near the truth, in seeming at least, that Ford, though with a feeling of regret and sorrow, acquiesced, and,

at his own suggestion, subscribed the letters Y.Z.; for, though it means nothing, said he, it is as good as any other signature.

Casey was charmed to have the letter written; the time for sending it, too, was the most opportune in the world. Miss Peters was gone with the young Therese to Hastings, and the impressible mind of the old lady was thus left without counter-influences. Mrs. Grafton also was about to spend some time with her mother; she herself should thus be on the spot, to take advantage of every opportunity that favoured her.

There is an instinctive sense of right and wrong in every human breast: people can hardly be made blind tools of wickedness; for, though they may impose upon others, it is impossible to impose upon themselves! Such were some of the cogitations of John Ford's breast that same evening. There was something wrong and false about that vulgar letter, which made him offended with himself for having written it. And yet, reasoned he with himself, "she said, you will oblige me greatly by writing this letter for her." Doubt, and the absence of self-respect, are miserable feelings. He sighed, and sighed bitterly too, when he thought, if this was dependance, if this was the penalty of loving the beautiful, and being flattered by the great, how much preferable was poverty and obscurity!

The letter arrived duly at Normacott Lodge, and was read and re-read by the old lady to whom it was addressed, with disgust and aversion. "I hate these anonymous letters," said she, putting it into her writing-desk, "and I believe Moore to be an honest, excellent creature. I will not believe a word of it—not a single single word of it!" said the old lady to herself, quite energetically. "When Miss Peters comes home she shall inquire into it; but, in the meantime, I'll try to forget all about it."

Mrs. Normacott tried not to think of the letter, but

thoughts of it would present themselves. She determined to think poor Jane honest and excellent; but still, she said to herself, what if she should not be so? It was an unpleasant thing to be troubled with these haunting thoughts. She wished with all her heart Miss Peters would come back, and had half a mind to mention it to her daughter; but someway Mrs. Grafton was always occupied with other things, and she had not been in the habit of talking on such matters with her; so it must wait, she said, though it was a very important thing, till Miss Peters returned.

Mrs. Casey was greatly surprised to hear nothing said of the letter, and greatly annoyed too, to see Jane apparently as much trusted by her mistress as ever. Jane, however, though Mrs. Normacott fancied there was no difference in her behaviour, perceived that she had someway lost confidence, and renewed her efforts doubly to oblige. Mrs. Casey, not satisfied, therefore, with things as they appeared to her, and glad of the absence of Miss Peters, determined to do all that she feared the letter had not done. Accordingly, in the first place, she began by the most vigilant attentions to the old lady, of which she was very susceptible.

"Moore," said she, one day, "seems a remarkable clever young person."

"Yes, clever she certainly is," replied Mrs. Normacott, but coolly. Upon this Mrs. Casey began to speak, as she well knew how, not with direct charges, but insinuations, and fears, and apprehensions; and she had heard, and, if it would not be presumptuous, she could tell something. &c., &c. Mrs. Normacott took one pinch of snuff after another, and, thinking she would say nothing about the letter, yet encouraged Casey to go on talking. The more Casey talked, the more dissatisfied became the mind of the old lady, till at last she confessed that she herself had had some reason for doubt, but that she wished not to be rash; she should

do nothing till Miss Peters returned. Mrs. Casey's object, however, was to get all accomplished while Miss Peters was away; so she took an early opportunity of suggesting to the old lady, that as there was no doubt but that all those suspicions of Moore would be fully established, "If I might be so presumptuous, ma'am," said she, in her smoothest voice, "and Moore should leave—although I'm sure I would not be the cause, if she is innocent, of her losing a place like this, which is one in a million—I would make bold, ma'am, to recommend my niece, who is well known to my lady, as innocent and well-mannered a young woman as any in the world." Mrs. Normacott said she would think about this; but she did not object to see the young woman. Satisfied so far with her scheme, Mrs. Casey fur her proposed that she should send for a most respectable young man, who had lived as fellow-servant with Moore in a gentleman's family, and who would testify as to her having stolen some valuable property. Mrs. Normacott remembered the anonymous letter; but she, being a timid person, was terrified at the idea of a man coming before her to witness to anything; so she peremptorily said, "Oh, no, no!—no such thing! If Moore was dishonest, it would all be found out when Miss Peters came back!" That was unsatisfactory; but Mrs. Casey was not disheartened. Mrs. Normacott now told her daughter what had been done. Mrs. Grafton did not seem pleased; said that Casey was fond of meddling; and that she, for her part, should prefer Moore to Henrietta Casey. Poor Mrs. Normacott! she was so tossed about by a variety of opinions, she knew not what to do; and Jane, as was natural, found her situation painfully unpleasant, without knowing how she had offended, or who was her enemy. Henrietta Casey, too, was come; but, greviously to the annoyance of her aunt, Mrs. Normacott gave her no permission for her to come to her presence. The girl, therefore, had nothing to do

but to amuse herself with the younger servants, and play tricks on the older ones, which, sober as they were, gave no satisfaction.

When Miss Peters returned, she found what decided prejudice had taken possession of the old lady's mind. Everything was told to her, and, as if in confirmation, the anonymous letter produced; but Miss Peters was not as easily convinced, or rather swayed in opinion, as Mrs. Normacott. "Trust it to me," said she, "and I will discover if she be innocent or guilty. Mrs. Tremaine I happened fortunately to meet at Hastings: I will write to her. This anonymous letter is a false thing, and, if I am not deceived, Casey herself has had a hand in it."

Mrs. Normacott felt at once ashamed of having listened so much to Casey. She thought it was well, therefore, to let the subject drop, after assuring Miss Peters that she would leave it all to her; and, to divert her thoughts from a subject which was not flattering to her, she sent for her grandchild.

Therese came bounding in with a garland of flowers round her head. "How like a picture you are, child!" exclaimed the old lady; "I wish Chalon could see you now!"

"Moore has made it for me—is it not pretty?" said the child. "And Moore is crying so, it makes me quite sorry to see her; she says she has cried a deal lately, grandmamma."

"Give her this half-sovereign," said Mrs. Normacott, kissing her; "say it is from me, because she has made you this pretty garland. But, Therese," said the weak-minded old lady, "you need not let Casey see you give it to her."

Normacott Lodge was undergoing repair; workmen were employed in the dining-room, which was under the suite of rooms used by Mrs. Normacott, Miss Peters, and the little Therese. Jane slept in an ante-room

adjoining Mrs. Normacott's dressing-room. There were many workmen, some of them young, employed about the place; and, as Henrietta Casey was very pretty and very giddy, and had not, as we said, much to do, being tired of the grave servants, nothing was more natural than to go into this great dining-room, and laugh and flirt with the young workmen. They were all romping together on that afternoon when Miss Peters returned. Henrietta snatched off first one paper-cap and then another, and threw them on to a high scaffolding at the end of the room. In revenge of this, one young man snatched off her silver thimble, and in the scuffle between them, it fell. In the evening, not wishing her aunt to know of her loss, she took a candle to search for it among the shavings and strips of paper, among which she supposed it to be dropped; after searching some time, without finding it, she became aware that one of Mrs. Grafton's servants, a handsome young fellow, who was a favourite with her, was watching her through the window. He invited her to come out. She did so, setting down the lighted candle on the floor, sadly too near the heap of shavings, intending to return and finish her search; but the youth invited her to a moonlight stroll in the shrubberies, and the youth and the moonlight stroll made her forget both the thimble and the lighted candle.

In the dead of the night, Jane was awakened by a sudden blaze in her bed-room. Fire had burst in through a closet in one corner; all was stifling hot; the dry wainscot shrunk, and cracked, and blazed, with the wildest fury. Jane started up, and, wrapping herself in a woollen cloak, which fortunately was near her, rushed into Mrs. Normacott's room, which the fire had not yet reached, and, hastily undrawing the curtains, exclaimed, "For God's sake, ma'am, wake! fire is in the house!" And then, seeing the terrified and bewildered lady almost insensible with fright and sur-

prise, she wrapped a blanket round her, and, snatching her up in her arms, carried her along the already heating passage to that part of the house which was most distant from the fire, screaming as she rushed along, at the top of her voice, "Fire! fire!" to rouse the household.

She laid the old lady on the sofa, and then flew back to the chamber of Miss Peters and Therese, whom she found fast asleep. "Fly! fly!" exclaimed she—"fly along the narrow passage to the drawing-room; Mrs. Normacott is safe!" and, snatching up the yet sleeping child from her bed, she rushed along the passage, followed by Miss Peters.

The house was now aroused; the alarm-bell was ringing; the engine belonging to the Lodge was being got out; when Mrs. Normacott, clasping Therese to her breast, exclaimed, "My daughter! my daughter! where is she?" "I might have been burnt in my bed," said Mrs. Grafton, in an angry tone, entering at that moment, half-dressed, "for any care of Casey's about me. The woman must have been drunk! Moore, I thank you! I owe my life to you!" said she, throwing herself on a sofa, and bursting into a flood of hysterical tears.

Clothes and valuables were brought in and thrown down, and, nobody knowing exactly what they did, dressed themselves as best they might.

"The east wing is all in flame," said the house-steward, entering. "We have saved whatever we can of furniture and pictures, but the rest must go. The jewels, the plate-chest, and the deed-box, are all safe." "The deed in my table-drawer!" exclaimed Mrs. Normacott, struck as by a terrible thought—"the deed which Mr. —— returned yesterday! the parchments, tied with red tape, which I myself laid in my table-drawer yesterday!—if they are lost. Good God! they must not be lost!" The old steward shook his head, and said it was too late now; that he had taken care of the deed-chest, and he thought all was right then; he had forgotten those deeds.

"They must not be lost," exclaimed Mrs. Grafton, starting up with a sudden energy, for she knew the value of the parchments. "A hundred pounds to whoever will rescue those parchments!" exclaimed she, in a loud clear voice, so that everybody might hear, and rushing towards the scene of the burning.

"Where are they? where are they?" inquired twenty voices. The most clear and precise directions were given. The steward pointed to the room, and repeated the offered reward. Fire, however, was in the room, and around it—fire seemed to cut it off from the rest of the house; but, while they were looking on, a cry, half of terror, half of triumph, rose from all: the figure of a woman was seen in the midst of the flames, holding aloft, as if to deter others from the dangers of the attempt, the desired parchments. She endeavoured to return by the narrow passage, by which she had reached the rooms: the applause of the spectators encouraged her to the attempt, but the force of the flames utterly prevented it. She rushed back almost frantic. Still there was one hope of escape, and that was by a side staircase. The crowd outside, the people everywhere, rushed there to assist her escape, if escape were possible. The flaming staircase fell with her weight, and a cry of horror, despair, and sympathy rose, which was heard above the roaring of the fire. But the heroism of the poor girl had made a hero of every man who was present. All, regardless of fire or danger, rushed forward, and from the mass of burning ruins, she, with the parchments still grasped in her hand, was carried off insensible.

The fire was extinguished; danger to either life or property was now at an end. Much furniture was destroyed; but whatever was of great value had been saved, and saved, as everybody said, by the heroism of a maid-servant; and not only had valuables been saved, but life also. Mrs. Normacott remembered how

she had been borne off from her bed in this poor girl's arms; the beloved Therese, too, had been carried through advancing flames by the same heroic creature, Mrs. Grafton had been roused too from sleep by her: they all were safe—no life lost. Yet, how much had not her life been endangered, and how much, even now, was she not suffering! Her arm was broken by the fall, and one shoulder terribly scorched; and, had it not been for the heroism which her own heroism inspired, she must have perished in the flames!

Poor girl! what a tide of gratitude, and admiration, and kindness now set in towards her! Mrs. Normacott was ashamed and troubled to think how she had listened to whispers against her. "No, no," said the old lady, speaking of the anonymous letter, "it is impossible these insinuations were true; they are the work of some malicious person to injure her. Poor Bella may take away Casey; and, as to her niece, after what the butler tells me about her occasioning the fire, she may go about her business. I only wish she had never come near us! I shall settle an annuity on Moore, for her good conduct, and her heroism in the fire. In the meantime, my dear Miss Peters, see that she has medical assistance, and all that is needful for her speedy and happy recovery."

For fourteen days Jane was in violent fever, with delirium, and even at one time her life was despaired of; but youth, and good nursing, and skilful medical care, were all in her favour, and brought her at length into a state of recovery.

One day she was sitting up in her bed, with kind Miss Peters near her. Jane began to speak of the state of the household feeling towards her at the time Miss Peters was at Hastings. Everybody, she said, was so cold, and hated her exactly as if she had done something wrong: she fancied Casey's niece was to take her situation: Mrs. Normacott seemed displeased

to have her about her; and yet, she never in all her life had tried so much to give satisfaction. It was so different now, she said; but that was, she supposed, because she had exerted herself so much at the fire. Still, she must confess, she wanted to know what had displeased everybody so much before.

Miss Peters said she would tell her all, and she could, connected with the subject, tell her something also which would please her greatly. She said there was a something about a French time-piece being taken from Captain Tremaine's. Jane begged to explain. "No, nô," said Miss Peters, "you must not speak—you must listen to me. This Mrs. Tremaine I met at Hastings; she is there, in very bad health, with her father. Since your illness I wrote to her, stating the charge made against you. I have received this very morning a most satisfactory reply. She speaks in the highest terms of you; says the time-piece was given to you in lieu of unpaid wages; regrets what has occurred; and encloses for you a ten pound bill!"

Jane put her handkerchief to her eyes, and inwardly thanked God that her innocence was established. "Poor Mrs. Tremaine!" said she, "she must, then, be in good circumstances now."

"Unquestionably so," returned Miss Peters; "her father, at least, seems rich. But, besides this," continued she, "another charge was brought against you, regarding a certain child kept by you in —— Row. Mrs. Forster, your former mistress, has explained all this to me. I have seen your friend Mr. Mainwaring also, and even the child. I know all now, Moore, and so does Mrs. Normacott; and thus your character is not only clear, but one to be honoured."

Again Jane could not help crying. "Would you please, Miss Peters," at length she said, "to tell me who has made these unkind, yet artful, charges against me?"

"This letter it was," said Miss Peters, "which in the

first place made these charges, which excited prejudice against you, but which, in the end, has only served to clear your character; for, without this letter, I should not probably have applied to either Mrs. Tremaine or Mrs. Forster. The letter is not worth reading, but I wish you to see it before it is destroyed."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Jane, glancing hastily at the letter, "this writing is my brother's!—my brother John's! How could he ever write such a letter as this?—yet it *is* his hand-writing!"

"No, no," said Miss Peters, "not likely: it merely bears a resemblance. Yet the hand is very peculiar; a good hand with a deal of character: but it is not his writing, depend upon it. I suspect the quarter from which this comes."

"It is John's hand-writing," persisted Jane, as she had gone through the letter; "and if it had not been for the fire"—for Jane's property had all been destroyed—"I could have shown you a letter of his. Oh, such letters as he used to write! so superior, as I used to think him, to everybody else! He was a poet, Miss Peters; wrote such beautiful poetry, and always used to think so properly about everything. Dear me!" exclaimed Jane, with tears in her eyes, "I can't think what made him write a letter like this! But then," added she, the thought suddenly occurring to her, "he must be in London."

"What is your real name, Moore?" asked Miss Peters, a thought instantly occurring to her. Jane mentioned it.

"It is singular—very singular," said Miss Peters. 'It may be your brother; but we will not blame him or all that. I know something of a fine young poet named John Ford."

"My brother!" exclaimed Jane; "do you indeed know my brother?"

"Not personally," returned Miss Peters, "but some-

thing of his mind; and so do you also." She then recalled to Jane the poems which had affected her so much. "It is quite possible," said she, "that your brother, this beautiful poet, may have written this worthless letter, and yet be himself guiltless."

"Thank you! thank you for the thought, for the belief," said Jane; "and is my brother then indeed in London?"

"Yes," said Miss Peters, rising, "but you must now rest: this excitement is too much for you. Try to sleep; and to-night I will see you again."

Miss Peters told Mrs. Normacott of the probable discovery she had made, that John Ford, Mrs. Grafton's favourite poet, was the brother of poor Moore, otherwise Jane Ford. What a discovery was this! And the letter too, the vulgar anonymous letter, was recognized by Jane to be the hand-writing of her brother. While Miss Peters was thus speaking, Mrs. Grafton came in. All was told to her, the letter shown to her, and of course could be in a great measure explained by her. This was the letter which Casey had employed Ford to write, and for the obtaining of which her own agency had been used. Mrs. Grafton declared herself to have been for some time disgusted with Casey. Her behaviour on the night of the fire had displeased her greatly; this now, with its cunning, falsehood, and baseness, offended her more than all the rest.

"Ford shall come here to-morrow," said Mrs. Grafton, "and Casey too, and poor Moore—or Ford, I suppose we must now call her—shall be cleared before you all."

"She is cleared," said Miss Peters; and then told what Mrs. Tremaine had said and done, and all that Mr. Forster, and Mr. Mainwaring had told her of her connexion with poor Rachel's child.

Why need we tell of the morrow?—of Casey and Ford meeting at the bedside of Jane, unconscious of why they were brought there?—of the instant confusion

of both, yet how Ford was cleared of all blame, and Casey, confounded rather than ashamed, left to the disgrace of her own evil will?

What follows farther? To know best what followed farther, we must pass over two years, and hear the conversation of two old friends of ours, as they walked from the omnibus, in which they had unexpectedly met, to a very pretty, happy-looking house at Highgate, whither they were both bound.

"Oh, my friend," said old Joseph Williams to James Kemp, who, though still in service, was now out of livery, "I am glad to see you at last going to Griffiths's. Have you seen her yet?"

"No," said James; "it's above two years now since I saw her; but I've made up my mind to it now. I thought it would have been too much for me at one time, Mr. Williams."

"I was desperate angry myself," returned the old man, "at first; for you see, I'd made up my mind that she should marry nobody but you. I never thought of anything else. I was very fond of you both; and when she really was married, I wished to have altered my will; but, 'Nay, nay, Joseph,' says my master, 'thou shalt do nothing hastily. Know something,' says he, 'of this young man that she has married, before thou blamest her: I hear it is an old affection on both sides; and, more than this, from all I hear, I believe him to be a very worthy person.' It's hard to make one believe against one's will, James; I took a dislike to Griffiths; but dislikes are bad things: and someway, when I came to know Griffiths, I found that, spite of myself, my dislike was gone. He makes her a capital husband," continued the old man; "he is getting on famously in the world; why, she keeps her two servants, just like any lady; and then he's so kind to all her family. There was her brother John, the poet that everybody talked of so much—our folks were wonderfully taken with him.

Why, Griffiths set him up in a book-shop; the book-shop was nothing to boast of. Master said, says he, 'John Ford will never do any good in a shop.' Well, what does Griffiths do?—not turn his back upon him because he wasn't fit for trade, but gets him a nice sort of a post in the customs, or something of that sort, worth a matter of 200*l.* a-year, where the work is just an ABC sort of thing, and John can write his poetry and read his poetry-books, just in his own way. Why, none of your lords or ladies could have done as much for him. Griffiths has a way with him that makes everybody his friend. I've heard as how he helped some great member of parliament or other, who was fond of mechanics, to complete an improved engine, which he could not manage himself, and which now is like enough to bring in a power of money. 'Now this must all go in my name, Griffiths,' says he; 'but maybe there's a something or other I can do for you.' Griffiths never asked—not he—anything for himself, but just a little sort of a place for his brother-in-law; and the next week Ford was a made man. Oh, you'll like Griffiths—that you will, James," said old Joseph, with enthusiasm.

"It's possible," returned James; "but someway this has been a hard thing for me, Mr. Williams. Our family, you see, was very friendly with the Normacott Lodge people; so, as soon as we got back to London, I was sent over with condolences and inquiries after health, and such like. I was right glad to go, for I had made up my mind to speak my thoughts out freely to Jane. It wasn't a hasty thing with me, Joseph—not a bit of it; and I felt it all the deeper on that account.

"It was a month nearly after the fire; but no sooner was I in the servants' hall than they began to tell me how a young woman, they called Moore, had done so much on the night of the fire; how she had saved everybody, and had nearly herself died in the fire; how an annuity was settled on her, and how fond every-

body was of her; how she had all new clothes made her, because everything belonging to her was burnt; and how ill she had been, and was not even yet able to go out. They made a very affecting story of it; and all the old servants sate crying together as they talked of it. Someway I was quite impatient, for all this time I was wanting to see Jane; so, as soon as I could get a word in, I asked after Mrs. Normacott's maid, Jane Ford. 'That's the same!' exclaimed every one—'that's the girl that did so much for everybody!' Lord! Mr. Williams, what a fool I was! I could not for the soul of me help crying: never did I feel so proud, so happy, or so soft, in all my life. And then, says they, 'She's a-going to be married; her husband as is to be comes here often, and so does her brother: she's a-going to be married as soon as ever she's better, and Mrs. Grafton gives her her wedding things.'

"I needn't tell you any more, Joseph," said Kemp, after a long pause; "only that I saw Jane, and heard from her own lips that all this was true; and, though I always thought I loved her, I never knew till that day how dear she really was to me! I said, at the time, it would be the death of me. But, bless me!" said he, smiling, "it takes a deal to kill a body. I have got over it, and am going to-day, Mr. Williams, to do the best thing, and the right thing;—I'm going to shake hands with her husband."

"You're a good fellow, Kemp," said Joseph Williams, "give me your hand!—a right good fellow, and so I always said."

THE END.

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